LAND PROBLEMS & NATIONAL WELFARE

BY CHRISTOPHER TURNOR

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AND NATIONAL WELFARE

BY CHRISTOPHER TURNOR

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT MILNER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., ETC.

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INTRODUCTION

THE author of this book shares with many thoughtful and public-spirited men the hope that we may see the formation of a National Party, which will cut itself adrift from worn-out political controversies and shape its course with a single eye to the general welfare. That fine ideal has all my sympathy, and yet I find it very difficult to imagine how it is to be realised in practice. But if a National Party is out of the question, there is nevertheless urgent need for a National Policy, by which I mean a body of political doctrine, having some basis of principle, some *inner unity*, which will take account of all the great needs of our national life, internal and external, and propound an orderly and coherent plan for dealing with them as a whole. Certainly no such policy will ever be accepted in its entirety by any political party. But if it gains an ascendency over the intellect of the nation, as other systems of political thought have done in the past, it will influence the action of all parties, and make them its more or less conscious, more or less willing instru-

has many votaries, while there are not lacking good judges who disbelieve impartially in both. And it is not only over the main lines of policy that controversy rages, but over the many subsidiary developments, some of which are certainly necessary to make any policy a success—Co-operation, Credit Banks, the cheapening of Transport, the elimination of the middle-man, a better system of rural Education. All these, not to mention the burning question of Free Imports, are subjects of incessant debate. Yet the combatants have at least this in common, and it is no small matter, that they realize the need of turning the soil of the country to better account and of increasing the number of people engaged in its cultivation. That the land of these islands is under-cultivated, and that one of the chief causes of its being under-cultivated is that it is under-peopled—these two propositions at least are common to agricultural reformers of every school. The recognition of these two facts and the conviction of their immense importance have been slow in permeating a nation so preponderantly absorbed in urban pursuits and interests. But they are gaining ground now every day, and bid fair to shatter the self-complacency, with which we have been in the habit of regarding our lop-sided economic development.

This new attitude of the public mind is calculated to ensure a fair hearing to those who are anxious to urge the needs and the claims of agriculture. Hitherto they have often found themselves preaching to deaf ears, but now they can count on a large measure of sympathetic attention. The gospel of rural life, as preached, for instance, by Sir Horace Plunkett in his brilliant essay on the Rural Life Problem in America, has an interest and an attraction for English readers which it would certainly not have had twenty years ago. And so I venture to think that the present book, which deals from a different point of view with the same absorbing problem, is timely in its publication. I am not concerned to endorse all the opinions of the writer. But I feel the greatest sympathy with his main object and with the spirit of his enquiry. He is a landowner who combines with a practical knowledge of agriculture a high sense of the duties of his position, and, what is perhaps more uncommon, a keen sympathy with the farmer and the labourer. He realises the solidarity of interest between men of all classes who live on and by the land, and his aim is to point out what they collectively owe to the country, and what consideration is due to them in return. If I am right in thinking that the subject, with which he deals, occupies, as it certainly deserves,

a foremost place among questions of public interest, then the experience and the opinions of a man of his position and his liberality of mind cannot fail to be of value to all those who are earnestly seeking for the foundations of a National Policy.

MILNER.

Sturry Court,
Kent.

PREFACE

AT the very beginning of this book I must pay a humble tribute to Prince Kropotkin, that great man who has given so much thought to land and land problems. It was his work, "Fields, Factories, and Workshops," that first aroused my interest in land, and in the study of the productiveness of the soil and the possible yields of foodstuff per acre.

Scientific interest in the land is sadly lacking in England, and a "land tradition" is practically non-existent. Never in the history of our country has there been such need as now for a land tradition which would tend to make land recognised as the greatest national asset, and the land problem as the one problem that lies at the root of all social reform. Not only do we need a public opinion keenly interested in land; it is equally necessary that those dependent, wholly or in part, on urban industries shall be brought to realise, and to realise to the full, that it is essential for their own benefit that they spare no effort, however costly, to encourage agriculture. Then, and not till then, will our great rural industry receive the consideration it deserves.

If this book serves to arouse the interest of even a few of my readers in Land Problems, and induces them to study these problems for themselves, I shall feel that my effort has not been in vain.

While correcting this work for the press I came across the Report, lately published, of the Country Life Commission appointed by Mr. Roosevelt during his presidency. Though dealing entirely with America the conclusions of the Commission are applicable in so striking a degree to our own conditions that I quote a few paragraphs from the Report, as they form an excellent preface to the whole subject of Rural Development.

"The underlying problem is to develop and maintain on our farms a civilization in full harmony with the best American ideals. To build up and retain this civilization means, first of all, that the business of agriculture must be made to yield a reasonable return to those who follow it intelligently, and life on the farm must be made permanently satisfying to intelligent, progressive people. The work before us, therefore, is nothing more nor less than the gradual re-building of a new agriculture and new rural life. We regard it as absolutely essential that this great general work should be understood by all the people. Separate difficulties, important as they are, must be studied and worked out in

the light of the greater fundamental problem.

The commission has pointed out a number of remedies that are extremely important; but running through all of these remedies are several great forces, or principles, which must be utilized in the endeavour to solve the problems of country life. All the people should recognise what those fundamental forces and agencies are.

KNOWLEDGE.—To improve any situation the underlying facts must be understood. The farmer must have exact knowledge of his business and of the particular conditions under which he works. The United States Department of Agriculture and the experiment stations and colleges are rapidly acquiring and distributing this knowledge; but the farmer may not be able to apply it to the best advantage, because of lack of knowledge of his own soils, climate, animal and plant diseases, markets, and other local facts. The farmer is entitled to know what are the advantages and disadvantages of his conditions and environment. A thoroughgoing system of surveys in detail of the exact conditions underlying farming in every locality is now an indispensable need to complete and apply the work of the great agricultural institutions. As an occupation, agriculture is a means of developing our internal resources; we cannot develop these resources until we know exactly what they are.

Education.—There must be not only a fuller scheme of public education, but a new kind of education adapted to the real needs of the farming people. The country schools are to be so redirected that they shall educate their pupils in terms of the daily life. Opportunities for training toward agricultural callings are to be multiplied and made broadly effective. Every person on the land, old or young, in school or out of school, educated or illiterate, must have a chance to receive the information necessary for a successful business and for a healthy, comfortable, resourceful life, both in home and neighbourhood. This means redoubled efforts for better country schools, and a vastly increased interest in the welfare of country boys and girls on the part of those who pay the school taxes. Education by means of agriculture is to be a part of our regular public school work. Special agricultural schools are to be organised. There is to be a well developed plan of extension teaching conducted by the agricultural colleges, by means of the printed page, face to face talks, and demonstration or object lessons, designed to reach every farmer and his family, at or near their homes, with knowledge and stimulus in every department of country life.

Organisation.—There must be a vast enlargement of voluntary organised effort among

farmers themselves. It is indispensable that farmers shall work together for their common interests and for the national welfare. If they do not do this no governmental activity, no legislation, not even better schools, will greatly avail. Much has been done. There is a multitude of clubs and associations for social, educational, and business purposes; and great national organisations are effective. But the farmers are, nevertheless, relatively unorganised. We have only begun to develop business co-operation in America. Farmers do not influence legislation as they should. They need a more fully organised social and recreative life.

Spiritual Forces.—The forces and institutions that make for morality and spiritual ideals among rural people must be energised. We miss the heart of the problem if we neglect to foster personal character and neighbourhood righteousness. The best way to preserve ideals for private conduct and public life is to build up the institutions of religion. The church has great power of leadership. The whole people should understand that it is vitally important to stand behind the rural church and to help it to become a great power in developing concrete country life ideals. It is especially important that the country church recognise that it has a social responsibility to the entire community as well as a religious responsibility to its own group of people."

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LAND PROBLEMS AND NATIONAL WELFARE

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CHAPTER I

THE LANDOWNER

IN any review of the agricultural condition of England it is only fitting to begin with the consideration of the landowner. In the past he took a very active part in the government of his country, and the duty of local administration rested almost entirely with him. And though a gradual change has been taking place, tending to reduce the power and influence of the landowner, he still is, or at least ought to be, a leader of the agricultural industry and the mainspring of all local rural life. Some sixty years ago that remarkable man, Mr. John Darby, wrote these prophetic words:

"In proportion as the landowner loses the sole control "and direction of local affairs, so will he cease to be an "active member of the community, he will stand aloof and "give himself up to the pursuit of pleasure."

I think that all who are acquainted with country life and who watch the processes of evolution ever at work in all classes of society

will admit that Mr. Darby's forecast has, to a great extent, come true.

There are districts in which the majority of landowners take little part in administrative work, and an excessive and undue share is therefore thrown upon the few, who are thus overtaxed.

Fewer landowners now represent their shire or district in parliament than was the case in days of yore—largely because, even if they were willing to do so, many could not afford to devote the money or the time exacted by parliamentary life in London. Still, making all due allowance, the apathy of the landowner, at a time when the policy advocated by a large number of politicians constitutes a direct menace to his existence, is, to my mind, a remarkable feature of the present condition of the country.

It seems well nigh impossible to induce landowners to take concerted action to advance the cause of agriculture.

The Central Land Association was formed in the hope of bringing all landowners together in a common cause; it has been doing good work, and many leading landowners have joined it, but it could be wished that a greater number would actively identify themselves with the movement. It does not seem to be realised that this society stands apart from all other organisations; and that by diligently supporting a society which

is non-party, and yet is essentially political, one which works for the interests of the whole agricultural industry and is not merely a landlords' defence league, we shall be able effectually to protect all that is best in our present system of land tenure.

Disunited, landowners can do little, for their voting power is small.

If they form themselves into property defence societies to fight for the cause of landlordism alone, they will be playing directly into the hands of the Socialists.

But if they elect to form a great society, which shall exist solely to further the interests of agriculture in parliament and out: a society which shall be recognised as representative of all that is soundly progressive; then the landowners of Great Britain will put themselves in an unassailable position, and will be able to guide those essential reforms in our system of land tenure which must surely come.

The great point to keep in mind is that about 80 per cent. of the population has little or no sympathy with the landowner; in fact, any feeling there is may be looked upon rather as one of hostility. Reference is not here made to the rural population living on large estates, which, as a whole, is decidedly friendly to the landowner. A few years ago, when working professionally as an architect, I discussed the

social conditions of the country with many of the intelligent artisans with whom I came in contact; and, though none of them had a specific dislike for the individual landowner, I found they were all very much against the present system of landlordism, and felt it wrong that so much of the land of England should be in the hands of so few men.

There are only about 5,000 large landowners (of over 1,000 acres), and yet this handful of men owns about one half the land of Great Britain! And although in official blue books about 1,000,000 landowners are recorded, the greater part of these are men who own a town lot or two, and so do not count as landowners in the rural sense of the word. In Germany there are 5,000,000 landowners, and in France about the same number.

Taking present circumstances into consideration, I am convinced that the only way in which landowners can now maintain themselves as a class is by actively identifying their interests with those of the agricultural industry. From this time forward landowners should sink their own class interests for the welfare of the industry —as many in fact do—so that Socialists and extreme Radicals may be given no opportunity of asserting that property owners are pursuing a merely selfish policy. Landlords should so manage their estates that politicians and the

general public would be forced to recognise that the land, the nation's chief asset, was being put to the best possible use. Landlords should not only guide the development of the agricultural industry, but should direct the whole movement of land reform. Land reform will have to come within a few years' time ; and it rests with the landowners either to guide that reform—as the Danish landowners have done—or to see the whole process of reconstruction taken out of their hands and attempted by politicians who may lack that practical knowledge which is necessary to make land reform successful.

Landowners still subscribe large sums to the party chest : they could therefore, more than any other section of the rural community, force politicians to give heed to the requirements of agriculture ; they could insist upon the choosing of candidates for rural constituencies by reason of their agricultural qualifications, and could stop the present system of sending down "carpet-baggers" to contest our rural divisions.

It should be clearly recognised as necessary, in order to secure the solidarity of the movement, that a certain number of suitable tenant farmers be returned to Parliament ; for it is only right that the people who make their entire living off the land should have some representatives of their own in the House of

Commons. The same postulation applies to the rural labourers: it would in every way be desirable to have a few good labourers representing country districts in the House. The number of farmer and labour members would from force of circumstances be limited, but the inclusion of even a few would do more than anything else to consolidate the agricultural interest throughout the country; it would be the best demonstration of what combination could effect.

To secure this recognition in parliament, and the extension of the agricultural movement on a large scale, it is essential that all agriculturists should contribute to a special "Parliamentary" fund.

If landowners do not put themselves at the head of the land reform movement, guiding it wisely and in such a way as to cause the smallest amount of disturbance, and at the same time to secure the maximum benefit to the people in general, they will undoubtedly be swept aside —taxed out of existence—and this form of extinction is clearly in the minds of a large section of politicians.

In view of the present developments it is necessary for landowners to study the economic relation of land to the welfare of the whole nation, and also in great detail its economic relation to every question of social reform now stirring the minds of men.

From the national point of view one of the chief needs is that more food should be produced in the country. There are at this moment some 12,000,000 acres of poorly-laid down, neglected, unproductive grass land that could be put to much better use.

The question of the yield per acre, or rather per square mile—because it is in considering the larger area that our waste of land is most apparent—is one for the landowner as well as for the farmer. I fear that the need of more intensive farming is not thoroughly understood by landowners; as a rule they assented, during the period of depression, to increased extensive methods as the best way of meeting the crisis —i.e., less labour and less manure bestowed upon the soil until over large areas these were reduced to below the economic minimum.

All scientific experiments at Rothamsted and elsewhere, while they show that there is a maximum output which it is unremunerative to exceed, clearly prove that there is a minimum which is disastrous; also that a more than ordinary application of labour and artificials to the soil is commercially sound, and that expenditure in this direction is directly and immediately remunerative.

English landowners must learn to regard their estates as business concerns to a far greater degree than has been customary in the

past. To do this need in no way curtail to them the pleasure of their connection with the land, but rather will increase the practical interest of it, and will encourage that affection which is rightly felt by the owner of an ancient estate; for nothing is more destructive of the sentiment which a man should have for his property than the pressure of hopeless poverty.

It will be necessary, then, in the first place, for the rising generation of landowners to be learned in the details of estate management, just as the commercial man must know the details of his business. A few landowners send their eldest sons to Cirencester, Wye, or to the agricultural course at Cambridge. This is good, but the instruction does not go far enough. A young Dane, for instance, goes through a much longer course of preparation, often including the practical management of a farm as under bailiff and finally as head bailiff, the whole training frequently extending to seven years.

In the second place it will be found expedient to reduce the size of many estates: one man can manage more land than another, but a large proportion of the land of England is held in estates too large for any one owner to handle efficiently. I call an estate efficiently managed when it is paying the owner a fair interest on the capital it represents, in other words, on its selling value.

There is an axiom in the commercial world which is equally applicable to estate management: "When the head of a business can no longer grasp all its details then that business is on too large a scale for economic working." I do not for one moment suggest that the landowner should dispense with the land agent, for a go-between is essential; but I do hold that he should himself have a thorough knowledge of estate management, and should be able to supervise all that takes place; and above all, that he should be competent to devise new methods of developing his estate to suit the changing conditions of the times.

On the whole I am inclined to think that in the case of a large estate of 15,000 or 20,000 acres, the best plan is to have a highly qualified resident agent rather than to entrust its conduct to a firm of agents; the manager on the spot should generally prove less costly, and there is now a good available supply of well-trained and up-to-date agents.

I quite recognise that there exist numerous firms of land agents, excellent in every respect, who often send their junior members to reside on smaller estates. Still the danger remains that a firm will be tempted to undertake the management of more land than its individual members can give proper attention to. But the worst plan of all is to entrust the management to

a firm of solicitors; for it would seem to be self-evident that they, untrained in estate agency or in farming, cannot be the best managers of land. Yet I fear that a good deal of property is so managed—I have myself come across some extraordinary cases.

Another unsound practice which prevails to a considerable extent is that of looking to the Estate Office to provide employment for some poor and deserving relation whose sole qualifications are that he is poor and deserving. This is bad economy: it would be far cheaper to pension him.

Thirdly, it is important that the landowner should have, if not a very intimate knowledge (which would be best) of the processes of agriculture, at least sufficient knowledge to enable him to follow and to understand current research in agricultural science. He should see to it that the home farm, where there is one, is not run by the bailiff as a demonstration of extravagance, but rather as an example of how much the land can be made to yield. More home-grown foodstuff must be produced, and landowners should take the lead in weaning the country from the present system of extensive farming, encouraging in its place the adoption of intensive methods. The test of true patriotism for the agriculturist is the amount of foodstuff that he can produce; and the man who will grow £6 worth per acre

is a better citizen than the man producing £3 worth. In the words of Dean Swift, "Whoever can make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, will deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together."

The profit derived from the home farm will naturally depend on the management, and in very few cases will the landowner be able to show as high a margin of profit as will the practical farmer, who makes his living directly from the soil; but, discounting the higher labour bill, there is no reason why the home farm should not in every other respect be a demonstration of up-to-date farming. At any rate, the heavy losses which now so commonly occur should not be allowed to continue. I have several friends who tell me that they lose between £3 and £4 per acre per annum on their farming operations. These are extreme cases, but a net loss of £1 per acre is common. I think this deficit is often due to the fact that bailiffs of home farms concentrate their attention on pedigree stock and prize taking, and do not greatly care whether or not the farm pays as a whole.

In Denmark it is noteworthy that the landowner does make a profit from his farms in hand; in fact they are often his chief source of income. I remember an owner of a 1,500 acre estate say-

i ng, when asked if he farmed all his land, "Certainly; it would not pay me to let it—I want to pocket the farmer's profit also!"

The same conditions exist in many parts of Germany, and on the continent generally among the lesser nobles and landowners; they farm the best of their land and only let outlying parts.

While it is true that on the continent as a whole farms are less well equipped than in England, the reverse is the case in Denmark: in that country a great deal is spent on the farm-house and buildings, but it is not money extravagantly spent, for it brings in good interest.

I put the Danish expenditure on buildings at about double the English average per farm. This is largely occasioned by the more severe climate, and also by the fact that dairy-farming is the common industry and that cows require more elaborate accommodation than any other stock.

These splendid buildings are to be found on farms owned by the occupier, whether of the landed or the farmer class; although on the few big estates that I visited I found similar excellent buildings provided by the landlords for their tenants.

For example, and by no means an unusual one, I saw on a 400 acre farm buildings that had cost £9,000; and the tenants on farms of that size live in houses with from four to six sitting-rooms beautifully furnished.

If all this is done in Denmark, and if Danish landowners have succeeded in leading the development of the agricultural industry on lines at once beneficial to themselves and to the whole country, why should it be impossible to institute some such movement in England? The Danish landowners may not have as much shooting as their English confrères, but still they have quite good sport with pheasants, ducks, and partridges. They have no hunting, but they live in their own houses—and very beautiful old houses they are. They farm their home farms and do not lose money on them; they manage their woods on such model lines that the woodland generally yields the average rental of farm land. This can be said of very few English woodlands.

Above all, the Danish landowner has the satisfaction of knowing that he is playing a leading part in the agricultural development of his district, not as a noble patron lending his patronage, but as a practical working partner.

I admit that conditions are very different in England, and Denmark can only serve as a demonstration of what organisation can do for an industry. But we must organise in our own way, and when we English landowners give our minds to it I believe we shall show ourselves as capable of organisation as those of any other country.

Denmark is a small country, and after her war with Germany she had either to organise or go to pieces. Without the incentive of war there is no reason why we should not organise our agriculture, county by county, developing the resources of each county to its fullest extent.

But we must remember that the Danish landowners recognised in time that their old system of land tenure, which sixty years ago much resembled ours, did not meet the requirements of the times. So they set about remodelling it, and actively assisted every legislative effort of the Government. They sold their farms to the sitting tenants, often going so far as to accept a mortgage in part payment, a plan which has apparently been successful, for I met no landowner who complained of bad debts. In this way the Danish landowners did their share in developing Danish agriculture and making it the splendid organised industry that so greatly impresses the visitor to that country to-day.

In England there are still many landowners wealthy enough to disregard the consideration of making a profit out of their land, and so the incentive is wanting to put their estates on the best economic basis; but a still larger number of men lack the means to put in hand the economic re-organisation of their estates, unless they have the courage to devise drastic reform and to face

the possible risks entailed.

In many cases an owner's present straightened circumstances are not due to his own but rather to past mismanagement, and to the fact that his father or grandfather overbuilt the property. A landowner who is too fond of bricks and mortar can work more harm to his estate than one who is too fond of horses, and there are doubtless many afflicted landowners who will heartily endorse that opinion! It is sad to think of the number of beautiful old manor houses destroyed in the early part of the nineteenth century to make room for the sham gothic mansions, so dear to the hearts of our grandfathers. But apart from the size of the family mansion, there is evidence, on most large estates, of extravagant expenditure on the farm buildings put up sixty years ago by agents or proprietors who were affected by the wave of megalomania that swept the country when wheat was £4 per quarter. These large farm buildings are often inconvenient and have never repaid the money spent on them; for it is noticeable that farms less extravagantly equipped bring in quite as much rent to-day as do those with very large buildings.

The policy which prevailed some years ago of merging small farms in large ones is another cause of heavy loss of revenue.

Estates with but few farms in excess of 300 acres have suffered far less reduction in their

rent rolls than have those which include many farms of 400 acres and over. And when it comes to the 1,000 acre farm, few men could be found during the years of agricultural depression, or even at the present day, with sufficient capital to work it.

Many men suffering from financial stress are inclined to ascribe all existing evils to the Radical Government and to death duties. This is not a sound conclusion; and by accepting it the landowner is reduced to a feeling of hopelessness which prevents his realising that it is often possible successfully to reverse a forebear's mistaken policy. In many cases former life-tenants not only built extravagantly, but furnished the money for building by raising mortgages; and, instead of providing by life insurance for their younger children, often left heavy family charges on their estates. The result of all this mismanagement is fast amounting to a crisis—for the majority of landowners. The charges on estates remain constant, the cost of up-keep since the agricultural depression has actually risen in some cases by 100 per cent., and rent rolls have decreased in many districts by nearly 50%. It is a serious position for estates of all sizes but it hits the smaller properties hardest, for they have less power of resistance. Already the majority of owners of purely rural estates of 5,000 acres or thereabouts can no longer live at

home unless they have an income from other sources than land. Such a condition is unsound, and cannot last; either some means must be found to make the estate pay a fair interest on its capital value (market value), or the estate—in part at least—must be sold and the money better invested. Legislative interference may have hastened the present distress, but it is not the main cause of it.

There is another feature affecting present economic conditions, which I must mention, although it is a dangerous and delicate subject.

The amount of money spent on shooting, in spite of the decrease of revenue, is far greater than it used to be; the preserving and raising of game has been reduced to a science, and the lust for big bags has taken possession of men who often can ill afford the sport, and who endeavour to compete with the standard set by richer men who take shootings in the neighbourhood.

Still more important is the fact that on many estates more game is preserved than is compatible with the interests of agriculture. The land of England should supply the foodstuff for the nation, and when the head of game is so large as to injure the farmer then harm is done not only to the true interests of the landowner, but to the country at large. No amount of monetary compensation can make up for the discourage-

ment to the farmer and the harm done to the routine of a farm by having a considerable number of acres of barley destroyed by game. I have been over farms on which not only a large proportion of the root crop, but every single swede and mangold had been damaged by hares. I have heard landowners, men who ought to know better, say of such and such a farm that it was only fit to rear game. There are very few farms of which this could be in any wise true, but there are many which are not fertile enough to support a big head of game as well as to produce paying crops.

The argument is often put forward that it is expedient to keep up a large head of game, as without good shooting the place would be difficult or impossible to let. While this is undoubtedly often true, there are, however, many exceptions; and not seldom it would pay the landowner better greatly to reduce the head of game and to ask more rent per acre for his farms. It takes very good shooting to bring in a rent of 2s. an acre all round, but I know many estates where the amount of game preserved makes quite 4s. an acre difference in the rental of the farms.

But I must deal in more detail with the question of estate duties, that sword of Damocles, to which a passing reference has been made.

There seems little doubt that a section of the

Liberal party designs in the future to use death duties as the means wherewith to tax landowners out of existence, and also as a clever device with which to begin the nationalisation of the land—*vide* the clause in the Budget which allows the duty to be actually paid in land.

Great uncertainty seems to prevail with regard to the requirements of Somerset House and to the way in which the death duty schedules should be filled up.

I believe that a large number of estates pay more in death duties than is necessary, and the greatest good ensues where the landowner himself deals personally with the matter, provided that he thoroughly understands the condition of his estate and has all the figures at his fingers' ends. It is often very difficult for the landowner's legal adviser thoroughly to understand the condition of the property when called upon suddenly to draw out the statement for death duties. If the estate accounts are well kept he can easily make a statement which may seem correct but is not really so; for it is far more difficult to prepare a schedule of accounts in connection with a large business in land than it is to furnish like information in regard to any other business.

There are so many side issues which have to be taken into account—items which even good book-keeping is liable to omit, and which yet

make an important difference in the whole statement.

I must bear witness that in my own case Somerset House dealt very fairly with me in the matter of estate duties. I was not satisfied with the way in which the Estate Duty Schedule had to be filled up and so I refused to sign it; because it did not, to my mind, meet or make clear the exceptional circumstances in which the estate was placed.

Although I was told that it would be useless to submit any corrected figures I persisted and went personally into the case. The net result of my attention was that the sum paid amounted to very much less than that which appeared in the original schedule.

I do not mean to imply that I was treated with any special favour: there may have been exceptional features in my case; the estate paid neither more nor less than was legally required of it. To have paid more would have involved it in ruin.

Succession duties are in a different category, for here the Somerset House Authorities have no discretionary powers and can only carry out the requirements of the Statute Law of the land. That law compels the owner of a rural estate to pay a heavier duty than he would have paid had he inherited a similar sum invested in securities.

This was certainly so in my own case.

My case was undoubtedly an extreme one, as all my income is derived from land; whereas very often the amount of duty payable on income from agricultural land is confounded with that payable on income from town property or from securities. For the purposes of this tax I was obliged to fill up the schedule in such a manner that I was credited with an income really about three times as large as my net available revenue. This condition of law, which seems to be most unjust, arises from the fact that before Sir William Harcourt's death duties came into force, landed property was less heavily taxed than other forms of property. Succession duty was the only tax payable on land, and landowners often contrived to reduce even this to a minimum; but the test cases, as a rule, went against them, the judges rightly holding that landowners generally were not unfairly charged. At that time, therefore, the law relating to succession duties, though severe, was fair. When death duties were imposed, succession duty was at once felt to be more onerous, and was no longer fair.

As a side issue it seems unreasonable for an estate—especially serious is the case of an impoverished estate—to be more heavily penalized when a nephew or cousin succeeds than when a son inherits. Where there is wealth

this law merely mulcts the successor, but where there is not wealth it cripples the estate.

When Sir William Harcourt introduced the death duties he should, in common fairness, have readjusted the succession duties.

To complete the tale of injustice done to the landowner I must make mention of the perennial grievance of the income tax. The landowner is assessed under Schedule "A," and this wrongfully, as even Mr. Lloyd George admitted to the deputation from the Central Land Association. Every landowner who keeps careful accounts and is willing to exhibit them should be assessed under Schedule "D," and it is amazing that such a large class should so long have suffered an obvious injustice without energetic protest as have the owners of landed property in England. And, moreover, the more modestly rented the estate the greater is the injustice, which in all probability the landowners themselves scarcely realise. I cite three examples.

(*a*) An estate which under Schedule "A" shews an income of £4,500, and which pays tax on that amount, yields in reality to the owner only £2,500; and on this sum he would pay tax if he were assessed under Schedule "D."

(*b*) An estate which under Schedule "A" shews an income of £3,900 would be assessed under Schedule "D" at £2,000 per annum.

(*c*) An estate which under Schedule "A" shews an income of £5,800 would be assessed under Schedule "D" at £2,800.

In this last instance the owner's income is overstated for assessment purposes by more than double its actual amount.

Despite all the concessions made by Somerset House I suffered severely from death and succession duties, but I suffered and still suffer far more from the results of the errors of judgment of an agent who managed the property some sixty years ago. He followed that unsound policy to which I have already referred of grouping small farms into big ones, because he liked dealing with one large farmer rather than with several small ones. This mistake was coupled with extravagant spending on farm buildings.

The estate in question is an entirely agricultural one, and its rental is somewhat below the 20s. per acre which is given as the average rental for the agricultural land of the country. It is chiefly arable and therefore has felt the long-continued depression to the full. The rent roll has declined by nearly 50%, but this proportion does not express the total loss to the owner. In addition, the cost of up-keep has increased by at least 50%, for much building and repair that in prosperous times devolved upon the farmer are now undertaken at the

owner's charge: and further, the actual cost of building has increased by at least one-third during the past thirty years.

I give these particulars in order to indicate briefly what manner and condition of estate we are considering; and if I seem to dwell at undue length upon the details of the course I adopted, I do so, not only in the hope that it may be of interest to some readers, but also that it may even encourage others who are called upon to face the great difficulties and hard work attendant on the inheriting of a large estate in a distressed condition.

The Socialist ranter talks of confiscating the landowner's rent—a pitiable cry when rent there is none! In my own case either I receive a very low rental for the land itself, and no interest whatever on the capital expended on the estate during the past sixty years, or I get a low rate of interest on that capital and no rent; it is a matter of one or the other, but not both.

I am now considering the net income which a property yields for the support of the head of the family, for the payment of charges to other members of that family, and for the upkeep of house, gardens and shooting amenities which, when not let, must properly be charged to the privy purse and not to the estate.

After careful consideration I can say deliberately, that if the capital spent upon my estate

during the past sixty years had been invested in a security bearing even so low an interest as Consols, the net income of the family would now be considerably larger than it is. That this should be possible shows clearly how necessary it is for landowners to study the existing system of land tenure with a view to removing, as speedily as possible, the dangerous and unsound features of the present condition.

It must further be noted that in these calculations I have left out the original capital value of the land (the money spent in purchase) and have confined myself solely to the consideration of the capital spent on the estate during the past sixty years.

The estate is lightly mortgaged for its size, so that is not the cause of the trouble in this case; and that many estates are in the same condition as mine is shewn wherever figures are available. If capital does not bring in fair interest, then it is either badly invested or wrongly treated—and mismanaged capital is bad not only for the loss to the individual concerned, but it also constitutes a public evil.

But I have strayed from the problem presented by the area of land which I was called upon to manage. A very short study of the account books showed me that there would be a deplorably small margin of receipts over

expenditure for my personal income. And my first idea was, naturally, how to enlarge that margin. Improvement in this direction could only be obtained by reducing current expenditure without causing the estate to suffer, and also, if possible, by increasing the receipts. The worst feature of the case was that even the small margin referred to was by no means stable: given an extra bad year with the farms in hand it would disappear entirely. When I succeeded in 1903—a bad year in my part of the country—I had about 4,000 acres in hand, in five or six large farms, which not only had been paying no rent or interest on working capital, but for the preceding five years had shown a loss of over £1 per acre per annum on the farming operations.

The land in hand was poor and had been run down from years of too low farming. Still it was land which in 200 or 250 acre farms would have let fairly well; quite as good, in fact, as that of the average Danish land. But it was land which in large farms would not let during the bad times, and which until recently no one would look at at any price—not even at half a crown an acre. The whole situation made me at first feel almost reckless: at all events it inclined me for kill or cure measures. The only direction in which I found I could effect any decided saving in

expenditure was in the building department, and even there it was necessary at first to spend more than the annual average in order to get the buildings into such a condition that a permanent reduction would be possible. And here I found my training as an architect most valuable. On many large estates a poor return is got for the money spent on building and repairs. The accounts relating to this department are often inaccurate, as estate timber and estate hauling, etc., are frequently left out of the statement of the cost of building. Even with an efficient clerk of the works it is hard to get a fair amount of labour out of the building staff on an estate situated at some distance from the dwelling-place of the owner and agent: (—and though my land is all in one county, one part of the estate is 50 miles away from the rest). I came finally to the conclusion that it would pay me best to do building and repairs by contract on the part of the estate on which I did not live, and consequently I disbanded the building staff, with distinctly good results. But the most pressing problem was how to deal with the land in hand. Again my former training as an architect helped me greatly: by utilizing outlying buildings, and turning cottages into farmhouses, I was able, at a small outlay of capital, to let off 1,200 acres within three months, and as the area was

divided into small farms I got a fair rent. This operation meant the immediate saving of £1,200 a year of the former loss on farming that land, plus the new rentals; it also reduced the land in hand to exactly 3,000 acres, in three large farms.

It is impossible for a landowner, no matter how much he may have studied the science and practice of agriculture, to find time properly to supervise the farming of a large area, and I think the same remark fairly applies to the agent of a big estate.

This is particularly the case where it is necessary to change the methods of cultivation. When once a tradition is formed a single man can effectively supervise a large area; but when the object is to change the methods of cultivation on large farms, where for years the total receipts have averaged under £3 per acre, and where the bailiffs and labourers have grown accustomed to a routine of non-paying farming:—in other words, where it is necessary to give up extensive and to adopt intensive methods of cultivation, then a very specially qualified person is required to superintend the farming operations. The ordinary run of farm bailiff, no matter how honest or practical, is not the class of man for such business. That was one of the points that struck me most in Denmark—the high class of men employed as farm

bailiffs and the large salaries paid to them.

I wanted, then, to find a man capable of effectively superintending the 3,000 acres of land in hand; I wanted a man who was a first-class scientist and at the same time above the average at the practical details of agriculture, and, more than all, a man who could handle men. After about a year I found a man, the son of a Scotch farmer, educated at the University of Edinburgh and at various Agricultural Colleges. He possessed to the full the first two qualifications, but alas! his quick Celtic temperament did not make him a success with the sturdy sons of Lincolnshire.

At the outset it was my object to see which departments of the farm paid, and which did not. With this in view, I got a chartered accountant to tabulate the farm accounts, and it was at once made clear that there was a very heavy loss on beasts: a loss on yearlings, more loss on two-year-olds, and most loss on three-year-olds. So striking and continuous was the loss in this department, one which no possible allowance for manurial value could wipe out, that the accountant—a city man—became much puzzled. He thought that these beasts could hardly be kept for purposes of business, and so he asked if they were all kept as pets! Sheep, at the time, paid well, and wheat showed a clear profit per acre. But, somehow or other,

never more than two quarters of barley per acre was actually sold, and so it did not pay; though what there was of it was commonly of good quality and realised high prices. The grass land was generally very poor and a source of loss, and seeds were a failing crop.

The heavy loss on the farms was undoubtedly due to the following causes:

(1) To the fact that keeping beasts till they are three years old does not pay on the ordinary mixed farm with poor grass.

(2) To the fact that what grass there was was poor, and that in most years a large portion of the seeds and root crops were only half or even quarter crops. Though the farms were nominally 1,000 acre farms, rarely more than 300 or 400 acres were under effective cropping.

(3) To the excessive amount of ground game.

I removed this last source of loss as speedily as possible by exterminating rabbits and reducing the number of hares.

With regard to the other sources of loss, the way in which I proposed to meet them was:

(1) By substituting heavy milking dairy cows for fatting beasts; by trusting to arable land for providing food for the cows, and for such beasts as I decided to keep; in other words by employing largely fodder crops—lucerne, sainfoin, catch crops, etc.

(2) By endeavouring to improve such grass

as was capable of improvement, and by gradually ploughing up and cropping the hopelessly bad pasture.

(3) By so improving the land through better cultivation and by the application of lime, artificials, etc., that half and quarter crops would be the exception instead of the rule and the yield of all crops would be increased.

It was a large business to handle, and many mistakes were made.

One of the chief mistakes, I think, was the sharing of the services of the expert with several of my neighbouring landowners. At the time I was glad to take this course, but looking back I am now convinced that my own 3,000 acres alone, considering the condition they were in, required more work than the one man could properly give. In consequence of this joint employment of an expert the whole plan failed to a great extent in execution. But the chief source of loss arose from increasing the head of stock before we had sufficiently augmented the supply of foodstuffs by means of fodder crops, etc. We might have succeeded, however, if an unusual drought had not supervened, which still further reduced the supply of food on the farms and necessitated large purchases of fodder and even of straw, a course which is always disastrous to the finances of a farm.

I farmed these three large farms for four

years, and though the results were not all that I had hoped for, at all events they justified the employment of the expert.

The expenditure per acre was reduced, the receipts were somewhat increased, and a loss of £1 per acre was wiped out. This was due partly to the reduction of ground game, partly to improved prices, but largely to the constant, even if not sufficient, supervision of the trained expert.

FARMS IN HAND

Gross receipts and expenditure in terms per acre for the years 1899-1903, and 1905-08.

	Receipts		Expenditure	
	1899-03.	1905-08.	1899-03	1905-08.
Farm A.	£2 3 0	£3 6 11¼	£3 4 0	£3 13 3½
Farm B.	1 19 7	3 7 1	3 5 4	3 4 0¾
Farm C.	2 13 0	2 16 7½	3 17 2	3 0 7¼

N.B. In the first period little was spent on artificials, whereas in the second period heavy purchases of these are included in "Expenditure."

VALUATION PER ACRE

	Farm A.	Farm B.	Farm C.
1899-03	£4 18 0	£5 14 0	£5 7 0
1905-08	6 0 5	6 2 8	5 3 4

The experiment quite convinced me that if those English landowners who are now losing on their home farms would follow the example of their continental brethren and employ trained

experts, of the right sort, to supervise the farms, the results would be satisfactory.

When I was unexpectedly deprived of the services of the expert referred to, I was fortunate in letting the three farms; for I did not feel able myself to give the necessary time to working them, or to devote the capital required by so large an area. I am sorry that the many experiments which were of great interest to me personally, and which might have proved of public use, were in consequence dropped just as they were beginning to furnish valuable data, although I hope some day to take up the work again on a 300 or 400 acre farm, which is a better and more manageable size to experiment upon.

To make clear the various ways in which I think landowners can help the forward movement in agriculture I will now summarise the different points I have referred to in this chapter.

(1) Combination comes first in order of importance: the landowners of Great Britain must combine if they wish to fight successfully for the interests of the agricultural industry.

(2) Landowners must put themselves at the head of the movement for land reform.

(3) To provide the means for carrying on the agricultural movement a special parliamentary fund should be created.

(4) As a definite method to secure the desired co-operation, I should like to see every rural landowner join the Central Land Association, a society which exists wholly to advance the interests of agriculture and which has formulated a constructive policy as the objective for which to strive.

(5) It is necessary that the rising generation of landowners should prepare directly for their career—fitting themselves for it as the professional man does for his profession, as the business man does for his business.

(6) That landowners should as far as possible have a resident agent on each estate; above all, that firms of solicitors should never be employed for the direct management of land.

(7) There is much room for improvement in the treatment of woodlands.

(8) Much good would undoubtedly result if landowners would employ a higher class of men as bailiffs, or, where large farms are on hand, expert agriculturists, such as are found on the large estates in Germany. If they are employed profitably there, there is no reason why they should not be employed with profit here.

(9) I think landowners could do much to encourage co-operation among rural labourers; first of all by aiding in the creation of credit societies, and particularly by encouraging the formation of co-operative associations for the

purpose of acquiring land either on lease or by purchase. Also, in some districts the Belgian system for enabling the men to buy or build their own cottages could with advantage be developed.

(10) Landowners could also help to increase the number of proprietors by giving every facility for purchase, particularly to the sitting tenant. This is, however, still difficult; and, though many large landowners have been selling much land of late, many of them cannot make arrangements for the tenant to become owner because the machinery which an act such as Mr. Collings' Land Purchase Bill would provide is still lacking. The chief point to remember is that it is better in every way to have a 10,000 acre estate perfectly equipped and in first-class order than 20,000 acres improperly developed.

(11) And, lastly, I think much good would result if landowners could make a practice of never letting a farm to a man who already has other farms. I find this a difficult principle to live up to in the case of large farms, because it is only the man already in a large way of business who has the necessary capital. But in the case of small and medium-sized farms there are now, as a rule, plenty of applicants to choose from; and it is at all events possible to keep any small farm of say 50, 80, 100, 150 acres for

a small farmer, and not to allow it to be swallowed up by a large man.

A striking feature to be noted among Danish landowners is the combination that exists in the family itself. I mean the way in which the younger sons take farms from the head of the family and invest their money in the land. They do this because it pays them, and such a course has the effect of greatly strengthening the position of a landed family in the neighbourhood. Instead of the family being represented as in England by its head only, there are a number of units thereof living quietly on the land and in close touch with the labourers and farmers of the district. The system works for agricultural unity, and makes the farmer, labourer, and landowner feel in practice that community of interest which is lacking in England.

With us quite another system prevails: as a rule the younger son takes his portion—takes capital often provided by the land away from the land—becomes a professional man, or a stockbroker in the city. He does this very largely because he believes that he could not make a living if he invested his portion in the land.

Why is this? The land of England is as good as that of Denmark, the climate is better and prices are higher. Is not this mistaken course due to the fact that the education of our boys

is not of the right sort?

The life of a Danish younger son, living in a delightful old manor house, making his living, and a good one, out of mother-earth, is surely more attractive than a business career or the drudgery of an office in a town.

I have drawn this picture more for the sake of contrasting the two systems than with any hope that the Danish customs could at present be adopted in our own country.

I have made certain criticisms in this chapter, and in bringing it to an end I must take this opportunity of saying that I do not make them from any feeling of disloyalty to my class. I have simply mentioned specific features in our existing system of landlordism which appear to me prejudicial to the agricultural industry, and which ought therefore to be remedied. Taken as a class I believe the present landed proprietors to be quite as capable of good and efficient work as any likely to succeed them as large landowners.

Before I had to do with land I spent a good deal of my time abroad, and was generally heedful to learn anything I could about the treatment of land. It is, then, only natural that I should view the situation rather differently from the man who inherits an estate after being in the main brought up upon it, or after having passed his earlier years in military, naval or

diplomatic service. Such an exotic experience as mine must tend to make a landowner less inclined to accept the existing order of things as immutable, especially in directions where change would clearly benefit the country.

The opinion that land cannot be made to pay; that land is a bad investment; that the individual estate, if a purely agricultural one, only just pays its expenses, is the root of much evil. This opinion is, I fear, held by the majority of landowners, and it accounts to a great extent for the attitude of the larger proportion of my countrymen towards land.

I can only say again that I firmly believe that what continental landowners have done with their estates English landowners could do also, if they would give their minds to it.

And let me add one word to those rich men from the cities who buy land to enjoy its amenities, and spend happy days in shooting: cannot they also study the economic side of the question, and the high responsibility of their stewardship? For to my mind the owner of land is to a greater extent a steward than the owner of wealth in any other form. These men to whom I am referring could do much to introduce intensive methods of cultivation. They have money at their disposal, they have had a business training; and if in the process their shooting should be somewhat curtailed—well,

has not every man his duty towards his country? They would reap a present reward in increased interest in the land which would more than compensate, if they are the right sort of men, for a diminution in the bag of game.

Again I do not think that landowners feel, as it is essential that they should feel, the transition that has taken place and the changed attitude of the people at large towards the land and landowners.

Although many of my readers have undoubtedly read Herr von Zelter's most interesting articles in the "Morning Post," I reprint them here by permission, as it is interesting to learn the point of view and the criticisms of a foreign landowner and practical agriculturist.

"In Germany 17,500,000 people are employed in agriculture, in England 980,000. The area of the land devoted to agriculture is, of course, greater in Germany, but it is not large enough to account for this difference in numbers. The German agriculture feeds a nation of 62,000,000 people, produces furthermore 20,000,000 double cwts. (about 2,000,000 tons) of sugar, and alcohol enough to dominate the world's markets. The English agriculture furnishes only one-seventh of the food required by a population of 36,000,000, and, notwithstanding the fact that the consumption of sugar is greater per head of the population in England than in any other country, does not

produce one single hundredweight of sugar. I will give what I believe to be the reasons why agriculture flourishes in Germany and is declining in England.

"German agriculture owes so much to England —to mention only the improvement of the land by drainage and the systematic breeding of cattle and cultivation of wheat, which we learned from England—that I should be glad if these articles contributed towards discharging even a very small portion of the debt of gratitude. In my opinion the development of the German agriculture has been favourably influenced by four forces; namely, a suitable division of ownership, the abandonment of the extensive method of cultivation for the intensive method with the help of science, the combination of agriculture with industry for the production of sugar, alcohol, and starch, and finally protective tariff legislation. Two-thirds of the land in Germany used for agricultural purposes is owned by peasants, the other third is in the hands of the great landowners.

"By far the greater portion of this land is farmed by the owner; only a small portion is let to tenants, and this little is mostly owned by the State or by public institutions which endeavour to leave it as long as possible in the hands of the same tenant or his family. The result of this division of ownership is a great stability;

the vocation and the home are one, while love for his birthplace and for his possession acts as a final incentive to the farmer to retain for himself and his family the property he has inherited from his father. This is only possible, however, if great industry is exercised and many of the joys and pleasures of life are foregone. In many cases it is possible only when the entire family works conjointly, and when the individual sacrifices his existence to serve the whole. In the middle of last century Germany produced more corn than was requisite for its own needs. From that time onwards, however, the production of corn did not keep pace with the rapid increase of the population; the importation of cheap American wheat rendered the cultivation of grain here unprofitable, and agriculturists realised that attempts must be made to get more out of the land in order to maintain its value by increasing the production. Agriculture struggled upwards, and from being a handicraft became a science. Through the application of artificial manure, through the improvement of the land by means of drainage and subsoil-ploughing, and through the development of new and more productive kinds of corn, the yield was almost doubled. An improvement of the stock was accomplished simultaneously by the importation of better animals for breeding purposes; milch cattle were imported from Holland, and large numbers

of sheep and pigs were brought over from England to supply the growing demand for meat.

"And yet the cultivation of corn remained unprofitable, for the increasing American export inundated the country, unprotected as the latter was. Germany still held fast to the tradition of Free Trade. The German farmer, too, was a Free Trader. The only branch of agriculture that paid at all was the cultivation of sugar beet and potatoes. The fact was soon discovered that by alternating corn and root crops the land yielded far more corn; sugar factories sprang up all over Germany wherever the nature of the soil permitted it; and on nearly every estate smoking chimneys showed where starch and alcohol were being produced from potatoes. Agricultural industry alone enabled the farmer to obtain some, though a small, return from his land. But the fight against foreign competition became gradually harder; Russia sent us cheaper rye than the soil of Germany could produce, in spite of every effort; America sent its superabundance of wheat and meat, Australia its wool, while even the Argentine and Canada seemed about to become exporting countries. It looked as if German agriculture would succumb under the pressure of these circumstances; the loss resulting from corn-growing swallowed up the profit made from the cultivation of roots, and

the peasant proprietor, who had adhered more closely than the great landowner to the cultivation of grain, began to feel very insecure.

"Then came protective legislation as the saviour of German agriculture. The fact was realised that if agriculture were allowed to go to rack and ruin half of the population would be impoverished, that immense sums invested in agriculture through the adoption of the intensive method of farming would be irrevocably lost, and that neither industry nor our Colonies were able to absorb the starving crowds. The result would have been an efflux of the most robust element of our people to other countries, which would mean an irreparable loss to our nation and to our defensive force. The idea of protective duties had, however, not taken root among our people, and it was only with great difficulty that the Government got the Reichstag to accept a duty which was so insignificant that it contributed but little towards relieving the growing needs of the agriculturists. It accustomed the people, however, to the idea of a protective tariff; it did not, as had been prophesied, react to the detriment of industry, and it facilitated a raising of the duty which soon afterwards proved to be necessary. German agriculture was by this means enabled to withstand the competition of countries producing cheaper corn.

"Agriculture had, however, suffered too much to be able to recover quickly; it almost appeared as if the nourishment of the increasing home population was an aim impossible for it to attain. Farming seemed so unprofitable that productive capital stood aloof from it, debts were contracted and the land decreased in value. Even the money necessary to carry on the intensive method of farming was difficult to obtain, and only the tenacity with which the landowner clung to the soil he had inherited gradually produced better conditions. A general improvement set in, the price of corn rose to a height which made the intensive method of cultivating it seem profitable, and the value of the land increased; capital could again be obtained easily, and the prospect of the agriculturist was once more a fair one. German agriculture has now almost reached its goal; last year Germany exported more breadcorn than she imported, and the import of meat is reduced to a minimum. Such is the development of German agriculture; it has risen out of a struggle against terrible odds and against want, but it would have been lost without protective tariffs.

"The agricultural conditions in England are somewhat different. Three factors have contributed there to reduce agriculture to its present position: the system of ownership, the total

lack of an agricultural industry, and the want of protection by the State. Most of the land in England is in the hands of great landlords; very little of it is owned by farmers. The great estates are divided into separate farms, which, with insignificant exceptions, are let to tenants, and it is the tenant farmer who makes agriculture his vocation.

"This peculiar system of ownership has proved to have many advantages and many disadvantages.

"When the agricultural crisis set in in England after the repeal of the Corn Laws it laid the burden on the less powerful shoulders; it was responsible for the rapid decline of English agriculture, but it has preserved the State from a baneful catastrophe. Low corn prices resulted in a reduction in the value of the land, which means in England that lower rents can be obtained from the farmers; they reduced as a matter of course the area of the arable land, for only the best class of soil can, by means of its greater productive quality, compete with the new countries. The result was a permanent falling-off in the production of corn and a drifting away of the population.

"The crowds of workers found new remunerative employment in industry, while the farmers, who were now without means of livelihood, found new homes and better conditions in the

Colonies. They settled on the fertile plains of Canada and on the pasture land of Australia, and laid the foundation-stone for the World-Empire of Great Britain as it exists to-day. The tenant was able to shift the burden on to the shoulders of the landlord. Natural inclination and the peculiarity of the system of letting the land pointed to cattle-breeding. The Englishman is a great lover of animals. A tenant will always apply his energies to the improvement of what belongs to him; he will not invest more of his capital and of his work in land which is not his own than is absolutely necessary, but he will use every endeavour to raise the quality of the live stock that is his own property. Hence, therefore, the tiller of the land became a cattle-breeder, who found his pride and his joy in breeding the most perfect animal; and in this domain the achievement of English agriculture has been magnificent. The English breed of horses is still to-day unrivalled, and the creation of new races of oxen, sheep, and pigs, bred for their meat-giving properties, is a model for the rest of the world.

"Cattle-breeding, even when carried to perfection, denudes the land of people. Intense cattle-breeding and intensive cultivation of corn are antitheses; the one takes away the opportunity to work, the other provides the opportunity. Intensive tillage of the land, which

seeks to flourish in close connection with the agricultural industry, thus became an impossibility. It might have proved to be a remedy; not a thorough one, it is true, but it would have sufficed to retard the fall in the value of the land and to check the depopulation of the country districts. I firmly believe that even to-day it is capable of breathing new life into English agriculture. I could not discover that the sugar beet is grown anywhere in England, and in reply to my question why it is not grown there, I always received the answer: The sugar sent us by Germany is so cheap that we cannot compete with it. This I cannot understand. The bounty system which formerly provided England with such cheap sugar was given up long ago; the soil of England is for the most part more fertile than that of Germany; the ground rent is less than in Germany; on similar soil the German farmer grows sugar beet with success, and pays double the rent that the English farmer does. There seems to be no reason why the cultivation of sugar beet, which is possible in Germany, should not be successfully carried out in England. The English land system is particularly favourable to it; the farmer could grow the beet, and the landlord could run the factory in which the sugar is extracted from it. Both parties could be bound by long contracts, and both thus have

an interest in the profits; the dependence of each party on the other would facilitate the introduction of the change and would ensure the supply of material to the factory from its own neighbourhood.

"I see only one difficulty in the way, namely, the dearth of workers. Even this, however, is not insurmountable; it will have rather a favourable effect than otherwise, in that it will prevent a too rapid growth of the sugar production, and enable Germany gradually to dispose otherwise of her production. A factory which is to prosper requires the produce of at least 2,000 hectares (about 5,000 acres), which means that it must be surrounded by an area of at least 8,000 hectares (about 20,000 acres). A trained workman can attend to 1 to 1½ hectares of beet, which requires attention during 6 to 8 weeks in the spring and 3 to 4 weeks in the autumn; the employment of machinery reduces the work required to be done by human beings by 30 per cent. A farm of the size mentioned above, devoted to the cultivation of sugar beet, thus needs from 1,400 to 2,000 workmen. A further difficulty arises from the fact that the cultivation of sugar beet provides work for human beings only for a short period of the year, but even this is not insurmountable. The residue from the beet sugar factories forms excellent fodder; the sliced beet

from which the sugar has been extracted is, when dried, an excellent article of food, which remains good a very long time, and is easily transported. In connection with the leaf of the beet, which can be given to the cattle either green or dried, this provides almost as much fodder per hectare as turnips do, so that there is no need to reduce the quantity of cattle kept. The cultivation of sugar beet greatly benefits the land. The subsoil farming which it requires increases the productiveness of the soil, and the advantage thereby accruing is as great for the tenant as for the landlord. I believe that the introduction of sugar beet growing into England would prove very advantageous to English agriculture, and not disadvantageous to German agriculture. I consider that it is impossible to extend the cultivation of the sugar beet in Germany; the demand for sugar is increasing with the growth of the population and the advance of the general well-being of the people. The export figures must and can decline without affecting the German sugar industry detrimentally.

"The third of the factors which have been harmful to English agriculture is the total lack of protection accorded by the State by means of tariffs. When the corn duties were repealed the price of corn sank; lower corn prices mean declining rents, and result in a diminution of the area of cultivated land. On the other hand, a

protective duty of course produces a rise in the price of corn and increases the value of the land; it is therefore perfectly comprehensible that English agriculturists strive for protective tariffs.

"The question whether they will have Protection or Free Trade must naturally be solved by the English themselves. Would the adoption of protective duties, however, bring English agriculture nearer its aim? Would it thereby be enabled to nourish the population of the British Islands? What would be the probable consequence of the adoption of a duty on corn? An augmentation of the value of the land, a better livelihood for the tenant in occupation, and, of course, also an increase in the area of the land devoted to the cultivation of corn. The cultivation of corn, however, would soon reach a limit, owing to the scarcity of agricultural labourers; there is little probability of workmen returning to the country from the towns, for work on the land has no charms for the townsman. The prospect of possession, on the other hand, is alluring to him; the wish to own a piece of land is inborn in every man. If, therefore, protective duties are to be beneficial they must be accompanied by an internal colonisation on a large scale. An endeavour should be made to create afresh a peasantry, and a new class of landowners occupying an intermediate position between them and the great landlords. Tenants

should be enabled to obtain possession of the land they rent by paying off its price in instalments. These innovations would assist the protective duties, and the empty fields would once again be peopled with industrious men and women eager to remain on the land. Furthermore, the odium that they enrich one section of the population at the expense of another would not attach to protective duties, and this is a feature calculated to be serviceable in the political fights.

"I may sum up my ideas as follows: there is no question as yet of legislative measures for the protection of the cultivation of corn; and English agriculture should therefore endeavour to improve its situation by introducing agricultural industry. Should this succeed, time will at least have been gained to prevent further retrogression. If, however, the English people should adopt the idea of protective duties, the introduction of these should be accompanied with an agrarian reform that has other ideals than the augmentation of the ground rents. Then English agriculture will once again flourish."

CHAPTER II

THE FARMER

"NOTWITHSTANDING all this progress as measured by historical standards, agriculture is not commercially as profitable as it is entitled to be for the labour and energy that the farmer expends, and the risks that he assumes, and that the social conditions in the open country are far short of their possibilities. We must measure our agricultural efficiency by its possibilities rather than by comparison with previous conditions. The farmer is almost necessarily handicapped in the development of his business, because his capital is small and the volume of his transactions limited; and he usually stands practically alone against organised interests. In the general readjustment of modern life due to the great changes in manufactures and commerce inequalities and discriminations have arisen, and naturally the separate man suffers most. The unattached man has problems that government should understand.

"The reasons for the lack of a highly organised rural society are very many, as the full report explains. The leading specific causes are:—

"A lack of knowledge on the part of farmers of the exact agricultural conditions and possibilities of their regions.

"Lack of good training for country life in the schools.

"The disadvantage or handicap of the farmer as against the established business systems and interests, preventing him from securing adequate returns for his products.

"There are two great classes of farmers—those who make farming a real and active constructive business, as much as the successful manufacturer or merchant makes his effort a business; and those who merely passively live on the land, often because they cannot do anything else and, by dint of hard work and the strictest economy, manage to subsist. Each class has its difficulties. The problems of the former class are largely those arising from the man's relation to the world at large. The farmer of the latter class is not only powerless as against trade in general, but is also more or less helpless in his own farming problems. In applying corrective measures we must recognise these two classes of persons."—*Report of U.S.A. Commission on Country Life.*

The landowner and the labourer play important parts, but it is the farmer who makes the agriculture of England, and it is the average farmer, and not the exceptional man, who sets the standard. I am glad that my lot in life has led me to have dealings with farmers, and they have ever been pleasant dealings, the natural result of having to do with practical men who make their living off the soil—once the source of livelihood for the majority of the sons of men, and which still provides the best and happiest of all occupations.

The chief curse of our present civilization is that it tends to separate man from the land. Conversely, land is the greatest palliative of all the evils this civilization suffers from. This is not properly understood in England.

In this chapter I shall have to criticise—I should not be an honest well-wisher to the cause of agriculture if I did not criticise; but I offer my reflections in a most friendly and sympathetic spirit. My interest is in agriculture as a whole; it is the cause of the agricultural industry that I would make every effort to advance, and not merely the wellbeing of landowner, farmer, or labourer apart from the whole. It will be necessary for each section of the industry to make some sacrifice before the consolidation of agricultural interests can be accomplished, but was ever a good cause furthered

without some sacrifice? The landowner must be ready to give up some of his sporting amenities; the very large farmer, in some districts, must resign a portion of his farm for smaller holdings; and the labourer will have to take his share by paying the rates on his cottage, and by making himself a more efficient cultivator.

Labourers cannot expect farmers to be willing to give up land to men obviously incapable of properly managing small holdings. There are too many instances where the labourer has proved himself to be anything but a competent cultivator.

I have studied the farmer in many different countries, in the New as well as in the Old World; and one of the features that impress me most strongly in English agricultural conditions is the difference that exists between the exceptional men and the average run of farmers. Each county has its quota of show men, the stars of their industry—men who can make money whether agriculture is depressed or whether it is prosperous.

In the past the English stage suffered much from its star actors, brilliant exponents of their art, made to appear still more brilliant by the shortcomings of the rest of the cast, and the whole play suffered; but this has been realised and to a considerable extent remedied during the

last few years. There are now theatres in which the average standard of acting compares favourably with the continental average. As the star actor was detrimental to the English stage as a whole, so I maintain that the "star" farmer has an injurious effect upon the agricultural industry. In the first place he is cited as the typical English agriculturist carrying on farming operations on a large scale and in a manner superior to any farmer in the world. But he is not typical—he is exceptional. I willingly admit that his farming, *quâ* the large farmer, is about the best in the world. Alas! it is also far better than that of his neighbours.

I have compared 500 acre farms, as nearly alike as possible in soil, buildings and market facilities, and I have found the first-class farmer producing perhaps £12 worth of foodstuff per acre—that is, the gross yield, the total amount received for stock, corn, etc., divided by the number of acres on the farm; while other farmers, the average men, had very different results to show, £7, £6, £4, and £3 per acre, and some even less. Now the advanced farmer would be a great power for good if his neighbours would follow his lead and adopt his methods; but any observer with practical experience will, I think, agree that this is not the case, but, rather that he has a discouraging effect. The average man feels that Mr. So-

and-So has reached an entirely different plane of farming, and that it is useless to compete with him or to emulate him; his beasts always take the prizes at the local shows, and this does not encourage the average man to exhibit his animals. We have what really amounts to a class of professional breeders of professional prize-winning stock.

And it is this handful of men, in each county, exporting first-class stock to all parts of the world, who have earned the reputation for the English stockbreeder.

English stock has improved much during the past hundred years; but, although the average run of beasts throughout our land is probably superior to that in any continental country there is still great room for improvement. The system of shows and the original efforts of Coke of Norfolk and the like, which had so great an effect in the first half of the 19th century, seem now to have lost nearly all power to reach the ordinary farmer and to improve the ordinary stock on the ordinary mixed farm.

It is to my mind regrettable that farm statistics are not given in terms of so much per acre, as this method affords the best and clearest basis for comparison.

The total amount of foodstuff produced annually in Great Britain is in value about £200,000,000; this, divided by the total area

under cultivation, (grass and arable), gives a yield of a little under £4 per acre, which is a low yield, considering the richness of our soil.

The first function of the land is to feed the people of the country: in other words, to produce as much foodstuff per acre as possible. And if this is not being done under existing methods and economic conditions, then conditions more favourable to the land must be created—conditions which will make it once more so decidedly remunerative to cultivate arable land that the 12,000,000 acres of poor and unprofitable pasture will be won back to the nation.

I have quoted the receipts per acre of six large farmers, to show how enormously these receipts vary; it is not necessary to go abroad to make comparisons. Do not the figures which I quote show at a glance what would be the effect upon the food supply of the nation if the average yield per acre were raised, I will not say to approximately that of the show farmer, but to that of the second on the list, making an average of £7 or £8 per acre instead of £4?

The test of true patriotism for the farmer is the amount of foodstuff he can raise. His duty to his country is to feed the people; his duty to himself and to his family is to make a fair living off the land, and provision for his old age. In Denmark those farmers whom I questioned informed me that in from 30 to 35 years they

counted on saving enough money to retire upon.

So the test of the business capacity of the farmer is the clear profit he makes per acre, provided that at the same time he keeps his land in good heart and his hedgerows and headlands in proper condition. One often sees the latter a perfect scourge to neighbouring farmers. And surely it is only common sense to argue that the greater the gross yield per acre the larger is the margin of profit for the cultivator? This is not invariably true, but in general terms it is indisputable. How can a man, paying 10s. per acre and obtaining a gross yield of say £3 per acre, do his duty to the country, to his family, to his landlord, or, most important, how can he do justice to the land itself?

In dealing with farm budgets I think the most satisfactory way is to ignore tenant-right valuation; thus violent fluctuations due to the seasons need not appear in the farm books, and taken over a period of years this valuation is fairly constant. Study the gross receipts of a farm over a period of years and you have the amount of foodstuff which the farm is producing for the nation. Compare current receipts and current expenditure for a similar period and you have the farmer's profit or loss. Included in expenditure should be interest on working capital and all depreciation under respective

headings ; but the valuation proper, (stock, horses, etc.), which should of course be made annually by a professional valuer, should be kept apart from the current account.

The valuation, once a farm is in proper working condition, should vary very little over a period of years ; and whatever variation there is would be entered as profit or loss on the capital account.

It is a great misfortune that accounts have not usually been kept in such a way as to show the profit and loss on the different departments of a mixed farm : i.e., the profit and loss on the arable land, the grass land, sheep and cattle, under their respective heads. We are sadly in need of definite data as to the profit or loss on arable land. To arrive at this requires by no means an impossible amount of book-keeping, if proper labour and foodstuff sheets be used.

I think it is best to consider each crop by itself. Let us take for example wheat : on the one side the total cost of cultivation, of artificials, harvesting, rent, rates, and the interest on apportioned working capital ; on the other side the receipts from the sales of wheat, the value of home consumed wheat and of the straw. The same system would hold good with barley and oats, as also with mangolds, in their instance selling them to the sheep and cattle at fair market value. With a fair crop a profit

should be shown. Turnips and swedes present the most difficult case: here the cost of production must go on the debit side, and the food value to the sheep—not the cost price—on the credit side. The loss on the root crops should, in my opinion, be charged against the whole rotation of the arable land, for their employment is one of the methods of keeping the arable land clean and in good heart. By following the above plan it would be possible to arrive at the real profit and loss on the arable land.

The Royal Agricultural Commission has published hundreds of most instructive farm budgets, which will repay careful study.

The question of the amount of foodstuff grown in the country is of such great importance that I cannot leave it yet. I think that perhaps in the case of sheep farming the English average is as high as possible; though better management of our second-rate grass land would lead to its carrying a greater number of sheep. But this certainly is not so in the case of stock. A far higher head of stock could be carried than is seen in England to-day, and that not only without decreasing the amounts of produce of other kinds, but actually while increasing them. Everyone knows that during the past twenty years the head of stock of all classes has not increased in proportion to the

amount of land laid down to grass, a process which in many cases is synonymous with the land in question going out of cultivation. A very good grass land farmer told me quite recently that whenever he took a farm he counted on doubling or even trebling the amount of stock it had carried under the preceding tenant. If this process of doubling the amount of stock could be carried out on a large scale the annual £45,000,000 worth of imported foreign meat could soon be reduced to a smaller figure.

Before leaving this subject, and as a matter of interest rather than for the sake of comparison, I will append tables showing the total amount of home-grown foodstuff in several of the leading agricultural countries.

DENMARK

Area of cultivated land, about 6,973,000 acres.

Value of home-grown foodstuff, £40,000,000.

This gives an average yield of just under £6 per acre.

Note. During the past 10 years the amount of home-grown foodstuff has increased by 30%.

Average yield of wheat per acre is 40 bushels.

The average land in Denmark is of much poorer quality than that in England, and the climate is more severe.

BELGIUM

Area of cultivated land, about 4,000,000 acres.

Value of home-grown foodstuff, £80,000,000.

Average yield per acre, £20.

Note. M. Vuyst, inspector general of Agriculture, is the authority for the above figures.

For years Belgium has far exceeded all other countries in its yield per acre, yet it cannot be said that its agricultural population is as flourishing as that of Denmark. The principle of subdividing the land has undoubtedly been carried too far, and agricultural labour is still wretchedly paid.

Though some of the land is very rich indeed, the soil of the whole province of Flanders is poor; and yet, from the great skill and labour bestowed upon it, its produce per acre is equal to that of the rest of the country. The fact which the English agriculturist should most take to heart is that while the proportion of permanent grass in the cultivated areas of Denmark and Belgium is very small, yet the head of live stock per acre is much higher than in Great Britain, or even in England and Wales alone. In this comparison 8 sheep are taken as equivalent to one beast or horse. This number of sheep would be too high in the case of the large Lincoln or Leicester sheep, but taking the small Welsh and Scotch into account it is probably about right.

The following table gives an interesting comparison of the total number of live stock per square mile of territory in the respective countries.

Live stock per sq. mile		Milk Cows per sq. mile	
Belgium	180	Belgium	76
Denmark	160	Denmark	71
Gt. Britain	133	Germany	50
England and Wales	160	France	36
Scotland	76	Gt. Britain	30
Germany	117		
France	95		

In one respect in particular Belgium affords a better comparison for England than does Denmark, in that she is a highly developed manufacturing country, and yet has expanded her agriculture beyond all rivalry.

These figures are from Mr. Rowntree's splendid book, "Lessons from Belgium."

FRANCE

Cultivated area, 90,000,000 acres.

Total production of foodstuff, £500,000,000.

Average yield per acre somewhat over £5 9s.

Note. Much land is cultivated in France which in England would be considered too poor for cultivation.

In 1909 the French produced 45,000,000 quarters of wheat as against the 6,000,000 odd produced in England.

The consumption of wheat per head in France is much higher than it is in England.

The French budget allocates £1,200,000 a year to the French Department of Agriculture.

The English Department receives £156,000 a year; and to my mind it is astonishing to see the amount of good work which that department does on so small a sum of money.

GERMANY

Cultivated area, 79,580,000 acres.

Total production of foodstuff, £417,000,000.

Yield per acre, £5 5s.

The above figures are taken from the Statement of German Agriculture specially prepared for the Paris Exhibition of 1900, with such up-to-date corrections as could be obtained.

In Germany less wheat is consumed than in England, and more rye. Taking the continent generally, more cereals are consumed per head of the population than in England; at least double the amount of milk and of eggs; and about three times the amount of vegetables.

In England the consumption of meat is great —the large consumption by the upper classes, however, accounts to some extent for the higher figures. (According to Mr. Rew's report).

English labourers consume 87 lbs. of meat per head per annum.

English artisans consume 107 lbs.

The corresponding classes on the continent

consume from 73 to 80 lbs. per head per annum, excluding horseflesh.*

I give this short précis of figures after having studied every available publication on the subject. There is such diversity of conditions that comparison is extremely difficult, and must at best be wanting in complete accuracy. Also, many of our English statisticians have, I think, approached the comparison of foreign and English conditions from the fiscal point of view rather than from the purely agricultural one. Further there do not seem to have been any careful comparisons of international statistics within the last 12 years or so, during which time the home produce of the continental countries undoubtedly has considerably increased.

In each case the total amount of foodstuff produced at home means the annual amount of meat of all kinds, milk, poultry, eggs, market-garden produce and grain grown to feed human beings. The estimated value of grass and hay is not included, as these in the main go to produce meat or milk.

In the above comparisons I have laid particular stress on the total amount of foodstuff produced per head of the respective populations, because, as a rule, comparisons are made between the yield per acre of wheat, barley or

* France produces £13 of foodstuff per head of her population: Germany £7 10 0: England £4 14 0.

oats in England and in other countries, and the results are all in favour of our own. This is misleading, and causes superficial observers to assume that we are producing more than any other country—that there is no farming like ours, and that all is well with us; whereas careful study of the conditions under which cereals are grown in England and on the continent makes it clear that the main reason why continental yields do not show a higher average is because the thrifty foreign peasant farmers grow oats and barley, and especially wheat, on land that we should scarcely cultivate at all. And if the yields of our average wheat land were compared with that of similar land in France or Germany the result would not be in our favour.

I have one more grievance against the "star" farmer: not only does he tend to discourage other and less advanced farmers, but he blinds the eyes of the public and even of agriculturists themselves to the true standard of average farming in England. And I fear that he is not infrequently guilty of to some extent blocking general progress for fear of its causing a diminution in his own personal profit. I do not for one moment suggest that our splendid farmers, the cynosure of all the world, should be abolished or reduced in number: a levelling up is what is required and not a levelling down. But it is necessary that the present state of

affairs should be clearly recognised before it is possible to begin to raise the standard of agriculture ; and to this end we must further consider the traits in the character of the English farmer, and the various tendencies at work which have not been beneficial to our agriculture.

I must mention Free Trade here and enter into more details in a subsequent chapter.

English agriculture in comparison with that of Germany, France or any other protected country is penalised twice over. Firstly, because it has been accorded no assistance, by means of a tariff, against the competition of new countries where land is cheap and rates and taxes are low. And secondly, because it has been entirely denied those abundant facilities which have been so carefully created for agriculture on the continent—such as highly developed agricultural education, co-operation, systems of marketing, and cheap transport.

The competition of new countries was, undoubtedly, the chief cause of agricultural depression throughout the whole of the old world. It created a crisis that had to be faced.

This unforeseen competition—Cobden, at all events, did not foresee it, and Peel only agreed to Free Trade because he thought it impossible for wheat to sink below 45s. per quarter—was met on the continent in one way, and in England in a way entirely different. And

there is now little doubt that the English method was not the best, and that it has proved most disastrous to agriculture.

The fiscal aspect is not now at all under consideration, but only the manner in which the farmers themselves dealt with the situation.

The English farmer met this competition, and the resulting depression, by reducing his expenditure on the land, by cutting down his labour bill, by largely diminishing the tillage, by ploughing four inches deep instead of six, by working the soil less and by putting less into the soil in the way of manure; also, alas! in many cases by neglecting the hedgerows, ditches and drains: in short he so reduced the expenditure on the whole operation of cultivating the land as in many cases to starve the soil, so that now it will not even pay for the decreased amount of care and money spent upon it.

To reduce expenditure is praiseworthy if it can be accomplished economically, but starving the soil is false economy.

On the continent the leaders of the agricultural industry acted in the opposite way.

"How is this competition from new countries to be met?" they asked. By making each acre produce more than heretofore, by spending more on the land, above all by teaching the cultivator better methods and showing him how to increase his expenditure economically, i.e., to

his own best advantage as well as to that of the land and the country at large. Recognising that no country can flourish long if its agriculture is in a bad condition, every continental country has created a system of education beneficial to agriculture, which is available for the sons of all tillers of the soil; and this system of education has done more than anything else to check the disastrous flow of population from the rural districts to the towns. Education was the basis of all agricultural reform; it was followed up by the creation of a complete scheme of co-operation, which naturally carried with it improved conditions of marketing, and by a carefully developed system of cheap transport.

But it is unnecessary to go into further details; the development on the continent is now fairly familiar to all interested in land, and I have drawn attention to it here only to lay stress upon the contrast between the two ways of meeting the new world competition: the one —an unwise reduction of expenditure below the minimum required to keep land in good condition; the other—sound and economic increase of expenditure on land to make it yield more food for the nation and a larger margin of profit for the cultivator.

As education is the basis of all reform, the first step that should be taken in England is to

provide facilities suitable for farmers' sons—sound, generous, general instruction, *plus* special instruction in the elementary schools, and still more directly agricultural teaching in the secondary schools.

Wherever a young farmer of average ability has taken a college course the results are the same—he is ready to admit that he has learnt better methods, has improved his powers of organisation, and that he feels that his time at the college was well spent. Even better testimony comes from the father, who regrets that there were no colleges available in his day.

There are a few exceptions to this rule—I have heard of fathers complaining that the higher college instruction was worthless; but in these cases on careful enquiry it became fairly obvious that the students themselves were worthless—this being a point, however, that could not be pressed in discussion. That a very general feeling exists, at any rate among Lincolnshire farmers, as to the usefulness of college instruction is shown by the fact that the Lincolnshire Farmers' Union have unanimously passed a resolution praying the Kesteven County Council to contribute to the support of the Midland Agricultural College.

On the question of co-operation, a subject of almost equal importance with education, the

Farmers' Union does not speak with so certain a voice.

In its earliest days one of the chief objects of the Union was to induce farmers to co-operate, and it is regrettable that it should find itself more and more obliged to dismiss the subject. There is not the slightest doubt that co-operation on a large scale would do more for the immediate benefit of agriculture than anything else—the farmer would reap advantage in his sales and in his purchases and in a thousand other ways, by belonging to a highly organised instead of an unorganised industry.

In Denmark, where the average price of farm produce is lower than it is in England, I think it could be proved that a very considerable proportion of the farmer's profits are due to his working entirely in co-operation with his fellow farmers.

But the theory and practice of co-operation grows slowly in England, owing chiefly, I think, to the following reasons.

First, the English agriculturist does not wish to co-operate. There is the natural independence of the Englishman; he would rather make a little profit entirely by his own effort than a larger one in co-operation with others,—the individualism we hear so much of. But is not this individualism a myth rather than a reality in the case of the majority of smaller

farmers? Their "individualism" is largely under the control of the local tradesmen to whom they owe money, and in their individual dealings with professional buyers and sellers they often come off second best.

Co-operation gives full play to individualism, but co-ordinates it for the good of the group. It is only by educating the rising generation to understand the benefits to be derived from mutual aid, that the general antipathy to co-operation can be overcome.

In the second place there are undoubtedly many farmers who would join in the co-operative movement if they could; they are prevented by the fact that they are so much in debt to local tradesmen that they cannot support a scheme towards which in many cases these tradesmen are hostile. It would seem, therefore, that the first step must be to release this class of men from their bondage by the creation of credit banks; and surely even Englishmen would co-operate to obtain money. With a large system of credit banks once in working order co-operation in other branches would follow.

Thirdly and lastly, the large and successful farmer fails to see how he can benefit by co-operation. He says, "I buy on such a large scale and settle my account so promptly that I get practically wholesale prices; I should gain

nothing by joining a co-operative society."

For the moment I will grant that it is so, but the large farmer would not lose financially by joining a properly-worked co-operative society; and even though his personal inclination might be against it, is this not an opportunity for some small degree of personal sacrifice for the good of the community at large? And it will not prove to be altogether sacrifice, for it is unsound to say that the large farmer has nothing to gain by co-operation. A large farmer may be able to buy and sell to the greatest advantage so long as things are running smoothly; but the moment the merchants combine to raise the cost of a commodity, or the dealers form a ring to lower the price of farm produce, then the farmer, however large, can do nothing if he stands alone.

Further, the Eastern Farmers' Co-operative Societies and the Midland Farmer's Society are composed to a great extent of large farmers. Both are strong and flourishing associations, and they give a concrete example of the benefit of co-operation even to farmers on a large scale.

Some years ago the manufacturers of basic slag were about arbitrarily to raise its price; but this attempt was frustrated by the threat of various co-operative societies to import large quantities of basic slag from Germany.

Every practical farmer must know of many cases where rings have got control of the market

and have hindered the free and open sale of the farmers' stock.

In a properly developed system of co-operation the auctioneer's profits are divided among the producers; and the danger of connivance between the auctioneer and the professional dealer is reduced to a minimum.

To pass on to other sources of loss.

English agriculture loses a considerable sum annually owing to the wasteful and unscientific way in which farmyard manure is treated. The majority of farmers do not realise the very great value of the liquid from their manure. Too often, instead of being stored in tanks, it is lost through the improper construction of the yard bottoms, and it is even sometimes purposely allowed to escape in the ordinary drains. It is all the more regrettable that this carelessness exists, as the larger the amount of money that is spent on cake in feeding the animals, the greater is the relative richness of the liquid excreta to that of the solid dung. Manure should be regarded as capital, and so long as it is anywhere except on the field it is intended for it is capital lying idle, bringing in no interest. The liquid ammonia now being lost in the drains should be enriching the land. That the value of this liquid manure is fully realised in Denmark the tables below clearly show. In America many farmers spread their manure

each day, little bedding being used; this method secures the highest possible yield from a given weight of manure, and it is astonishing what a difference it makes to the crops.

The accompanying tables shew the respective cost of building manure tanks for a varying number of cows, as well as the total amount of manure saved.

The tables are based upon the calculation that each cow produces 660 lbs. of liquid and 1,500 lbs. of solid manure per month, the value of the liquid manure being 7/- and of the solid manure 3/6 per 1,000 lbs.

Number of Cows	Stall-fed 6 months.			Stall-fed 10 months.		
	Liquid manure		Solid manure	Liquid manure		Solid manure
	Value of liquid manure	Cost of Tank	Value of solid manure	Value of liquid manure	Cost of Tank	Value of solid manure
10	£14	£30	£15	£23	£35	£25
25	35	45	38	58	55	62
50	70	80	75	116	100	125
75	105	113	115	175	140	187
100	140	145	150	232	175	250

Next we may make mention of a widespread fallacy that has held sway for many years. I refer to the belief very generally upheld by farmers all over the country that it does not

pay to grow wheat, but that it does pay to raise and fatten beasts.

Let us deal first with the case of wheat. Many persons will doubtless say off-hand that if the practical men, making their living from the soil, declare that wheat-growing does not pay their opinion must be correct. I should be quite willing to accept their statement myself if I knew that it was based upon well-kept accounts which would show even roughly which departments of the farm pay and which do not. As it is, I prefer to accept the opinion of practical men who back it with carefully worked out figures. For instance, Mr. Hall of Rothamsted has held for years that there is more money to be made in corn growing than in rearing live stock. (Of course the rise in the price of beef during the past few months will, while it lasts, affect the case as far as beasts are concerned).

I will now give a short account of Mr. Prout's farm near Sawbridgeworth, which has been a wheat farm for forty years. For a more detailed account I must refer the reader to Vol. 66, page 35 of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society (1905): "The world-famed experiments of Lawes and Gilbert, carried out continuously from 1843, had thrown much light on the requirements of corn crops, and had shewn that if regard be had to these requirements their growth year after year on the same land, and

by the use of artificials *alone* was a possibility.

"However, what was needed was someone who would take up the work from the side of practical farming and demonstrate whether it was possible to carry out such a system and make it pay. If this were feasible, it was evident that a wide area of strong land eminently suitable for wheat growing could be remuneratively cultivated. Mr. Prout, senior, working in conjunction with, and under the expert guidance of Dr. Augustus Volcker, set about making this demonstration in the year 1861."

I think Mr. Prout affords almost the only example of an English farmer working a large farm under the direction of a great scientist; it is a distinction to be proud of, and his son, the present Mr. Prout, has carried on the same system. Many of our most intelligent farmers follow the advice of agricultural experts regarding this or that particular crop; the Scotch farmers are availing themselves more and more of expert assistance with their dairy cows, but I think I am right in saying that there is no case so complete as that of Mr. Prout. The more ignorant agriculturists often say, "Oh, science don't do any good for farming;" yet these same men are availing themselves of the discoveries of scientists like Gilbert and Lawes every time that they dress their roots with superphosphate, and they would be better advised if they would respect the con-

clusions of present-day scientists more fully in regard to the chemical treatment of their grass!

The two questions that the practical farmer will ask in regard to Mr. Prout's demonstration are, firstly, Can the land be kept clean and in good tilth? and secondly, Has the soil deteriorated under this system of cultivation? The present Dr. Volcker shews in the volume of the Royal Agricultural Society already referred to that it has not deteriorated. Mr. Prout's farm is 450 acres in extent, the soil is cold heavy clay. He owns his own land and so has complete freedom of cropping. It is situated near Sawbridgeworth and commands a good market, consequently the straw can be sold easily and well, —this is certainly an essential when the price of wheat is low. But Mr. Prout's is not the only heavy clay farm within easy reach of a good market, and much more might be done by baling straw, where the marketing conditions are not so favourable. In general terms Mr. Prout's methods of cultivation are to get as much land as possible under wheat in the autumn,—such fields as he finds it absolutely impossible to sow in the autumn he sows in the spring with barley or oats, though it is not good land for either. After six or seven consecutive corn crops Mr. Prout interposes a crop of trifolium or red clover, selling the hay. After such a crop the wheat does not receive its artificial dressing, so

that 25s. per acre is saved.

This artificial manuring consists of 4 cwt. mineral superphosphate and 1½ cwt. nitrate of soda.

Mr. Prout ploughs largely by steam and keeps no stock save eleven horses for farm work. He puts his cost of production as follows:—

EXPENDITURE

	Per acre
Steam ploughing, 10s.; coals, 2s.; man and horse, 1s.	£ 13 0
Dragging and harrowing 4 times	4 0
Drilling	2
Sowing artificials	1 6
Rolling	1 6
Hoeing	4 6
Harvesting and thatching	16 0
Threshing	8 0
Marketing	5 0
Seed	6 6
Artificial manures	1 5 0
Rent	1 5 0
Tithes, rates and taxes	7 6
Interest on capital	8 0
	£6 8 0

RECEIPTS

35 bushels of wheat at 31s. 9d. per quarter	£6 18 10
2 loads of straw at 25s.	2 10 0
Total	9 8 10
Deduct cost of cultivation	6 8 0
Net profit per acre	£3 0 10

As the farm is owned by Mr. Prout the rent charged (which is above the average of the locality) represents the interest on the capital value of the land, and it is a very fair interest. The other item of 8s. per acre is the interest at 4% on the capital spent in preparing the farm for the new system. So we see that after receiving fair interest on the capital sunk in the enterprise, Mr. Prout has a handsome sum over for the remuneration of his personal work.

Comparisons may be odious, but they are generally useful, so I now give another budget, one of the few that I have been able to obtain from farmers. This example is of a mixed farm of 800 acres of medium land, rental 15s. per acre, working capital £5,000.

On an average the farmer in question cleared £500 per annum, which may be divided thus:

4 per cent. on £5,000 capital	£200
Remuneration for personal superintendence ...	£300
Otherwise 7/6 per acre.	

This is by no means a bad example, and yet what a contrast it affords!

Mr. Prout undoubtedly spends a good deal more than the ordinary farmer on his production of wheat, and I am not sure that on an average mixed farm, using leguminous crops to the full, the cost of production need be so high, especially when a rotation is adopted in which

two or even three white crops are grown in succession.

Mr. Prout's figures are not estimates; they express actual results, averages over a period of years: even taking the bad years, or rather a group of bad years with low yields and poor prices, a profit is still shown on wheat.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Prout never sold wheat at 17s. a quarter, or at 15s., as an old agriculturist with much pride told me he had done; from which unique experience he argued that wheat could never pay again! The question of wheat-growing is of such vital national importance that we must consider every possibility of increasing the amount produced at home. Wheat is the all-essential from a defence point of view. If we were growing at home every ounce of foodstuff required, except wheat, it would avail little; the masses of the people depend upon wheat, and last year we grew only sufficient for about one-fifth of our population; or, to put it in this way: last year we grew 6,000,000 quarters of the 32,000,000 quarters of wheat required. I shall now show that it would be possible for us to grow a much larger quantity of wheat than we actually produce. I shall put the case in three different ways, and I think even the most sceptical will accept the first case.

(1) Mr. K. J. J. Mackenzie, of the Agricultural Department at Cambridge, works out the fol-

lowing interesting statement:—

"The whole arable land in England comes to 10,600,000 acres: under a strict 4-year rotation one-fourth should be in wheat, on some land it might be one-third, on other only one-sixth, etc., but in my opinion it could average one fourth over the whole area. This would give in a single year 2,600,000 acres growing wheat instead of the 1,600,000 odd actually devoted to wheat last year. Now I believe that if wheat was at a respectable price each acre could easily be got to yield an average of 4½ quarters, i.e., with wheat at 35s. to 40s. per quarter.

"We could afford to use more nitrate and give our dung more to wheat than to roots; we could hand-hoe wheat, etc. As a conclusion we arrive at—

$$\begin{aligned} &\therefore\ 2{,}600{,}000 \\ &\qquad \times\ 4{\cdot}5 \\ &= 11{,}700{,}000 \text{ quarters} \end{aligned}$$

to be grown in England.

"This, instead of being one-fifth of the 32,000,000 quarters wanted, is nearly two-fifths. As we now get over 500,000 quarters grown in the rest of the United Kingdom, this gives 12,200,000 quarters produced at home.

"My point is that instead of growing, as we now do, less than one-fifth of the wheat we require, we ought to grow nearly one-half, and that *without breaking up any grass land*."

(2) This is really a corollary to (1). Taking the same area, but supposing two white crops in succession instead of one, we should then get 2,300,000 quarters more, or a total of 14,500,000 quarters.

(3) I shall now approach the problem somewhat differently and consider the acres that were formerly under wheat in England.

I do not suggest for one moment that it would be profitable or wise for us to return to the whole area devoted to wheat when it was fetching fabulous prices. I believe that we once had some 9,000,000 acres under wheat, and, considering our total area, it is obvious that a large proportion of that land was never at all suitable for wheat growing. But the converse is true to-day that we have much land under grass which would do better under wheat, and which would come under wheat again if the farmer thought 40s. or 45s. per quarter could be maintained.

My point is that it would really pay the farmer to bring much of this land under wheat at a much lower price than 45s.; for myself, I would put the price at 35s. or even at 30s. per quarter. Taking the cost of production on an average mixed farm at £5 per acre:

4 quarters at 30s.	£6 0 0 per acre.
Value of the straw	1 10 0
	£7 10 0*

* Leaving a margin of £2 10 0 for profit.

In time it should be possible to work the yield up to 4.5 or even 5 quarters (which is the Danish average) per acre.

I contend that we could go back to the area under wheat in 1850, when the whole nation was practically fed on home-grown stuff. The area then was 5,000,000 acres; this at 4 quarters to the acre would give us 20,000,000 quarters, or, if more than one white crop were grown in succession, over 24,000,000 quarters: in either case the danger of starvation in time of war would be removed.

As a practical man I am well aware that it is impossible to make the farmers view the matter in this light so long as the present conditions exist; it is therefore necessary to alter these conditions sufficiently to induce the farmers to return to arable land.

It is very easy to see how this belief in the unprofitableness of wheat arose. It was only natural that a class of men who so little utilise the guide that good book-keeping affords should at once jump to the conclusion that it could not possibly pay to raise a product whose selling price had dropped suddenly from 50s. to 30s. per quarter.

In connection with wheat-growing, Professors Wood & Biffin of the agricultural department at Cambridge are doing most important work. They are producing a new wheat by crossing

English with Canadian corn, and have obtained a wheat which has the *high starch percentage* of the Canadian wheat while retaining the heavy yielding qualities of the English.

It is time now to deal with the other half of the fallacy that we are endeavouring to combat: that "feeding" stock pays.

We will admit that the pedigree stock of the star farmer pays him well; that the grazier possessing good grass land generally makes a fair turnover on stores or on half finished beasts that he buys at a reasonable price; we grant even that the average mixed land farmer may make a small profit on any yearling beasts that he sells for over £10 each. But on this class of farm—and it constitutes a large proportion of the land of England—there is a heavy loss on every three-year-old beast sold. The ordinary method in vogue is that one cow shall spend her whole time in rearing one calf. That cow in one way or another, and counting the percentage of cows that miscalve, costs at least £9 per annum to feed and maintain. This being the case, how can that wretched calf show a profit at any period of its career? I hear the practical man who has not studied accounts say that the manurial value must not be lost sight of. Well, there would be still more manure if each cow were made to bring up from 4 to 6 calves per annum, and there would be far more

chance of the calves showing a profit as stores or two-year-olds. I know a very good farmer who practises this method, and his beasts pay.

Naturally, calves reared in this fashion will not have quite the bloom that the entirely suckled calf has; still much depends on how the thing is done, and, financially, quantity will more than atone for some slight loss in quality.

I know well the objection there is to buying in strange calves, and the difficulty in many places of getting them; and the only possible way that suggests itself to me, by which the one-calf-per-cow system of raising bullocks could be brought to pay, is by making lucerne the chief foodstuff for the cattle of all ages. I believe this to be one of the cheapest forms of fodder for cattle, but I would like to see my impression confirmed by careful experiment at several agricultural colleges.

As things are, there is little doubt that dairy cows are the class of cattle that pays best. But in England, we are years behind the times both in our treatment of cows and in our subsequent dealing with the milk. Even in dairy districts milking cows are kept which have deplorably low yields of milk. It costs little more to keep a cow yielding 800 to 1,000 gallons of milk a year than one giving 300 or 400 gallons —but the difference in profit is enormous. It is no exaggeration to say that in a few years' time

the yield of milk per cow could be doubled throughout the country if careful records were kept of each cow's yield, if heifers from the heavy yielders only were put into the herd, and if pedigree bulls of milking strain were used. In other words, milk-control centres, such as exist in Denmark and in the south of Scotland, should be created all over the country.

Little attention has been paid to the scientific feeding of cows (or of beasts either); and the enormous difference in the cost of foodstuff per gallon of milk is shown in the September (1907) number of the Journal of the Board of Agriculture. It seems hardly possible that one farmer should produce milk for 2½d. per gallon, while a neighbouring farmer (and a successful man too) spends an amount on foodstuff for his cows which works out at 7d. per gallon.

In France farmers can afford to sell milk for 4½d. per gallon, in Denmark for 4d. and 5d. There would be an unlimited market in England for milk at such prices.

Our poorer classes, even in the country, hardly know what milk is; there are large districts where labourers' families can rarely get even skimmed milk. And the price, 12d. to 16d. per gallon for fresh milk, prevents a large class of the population from using anything like an adequate amount.

The dairy farmer who sells his milk to the

milk dealer gets 6d., 7d., 8d., and 9d. per gallon, according to the district and to the time of year. The milkman retails at 14d., 16d. and even 18d. per gallon. This is a tariff of 100 per cent.—for the cost of distribution and for the middleman's profits.

In Denmark the work of distribution is done for 30% of the original cost—and this includes the profits of the milk company as well.

In Danish cities the milk is handled with far greater care and cleanliness than is the rule in England, glass bottles hermetically sealed being common instead of our bad system of tin cans. English milk is exposed to such insanitary conditions that a very large number of outbreaks of scarlet fever and diphtheria have been directly traced to contaminated milk. The Danish dairy herds are now nearly free from tuberculosis owing to the systematic way in which badly affected cows have been killed, and those slightly affected strictly isolated. The government of Denmark considered the question to be one directly affecting public health, and therefore gave the farmer compensation for the cows which had to be killed for the public good.

I have seen dairy farms in America where 600 cows in milk were carried on 1,000 acres; another of 500 acres with 400 cows in milk. Much the same ratio is to be found in

many districts on the continent; one small farmer in Denmark carries 50 cows on his 50 acres, and I believe the highest ratio of all is to be found in our own island of Jersey. The reason why these farms can carry so large a head of cows is that the farmers put their trust in arable land, and not in grass land, for providing the food for their cattle. This constitutes one of the great differences between the English and the foreign farmer: the former considers grass land the chief source of food-stuff for his cows, and to a great extent for his beasts as well; the latter looks to his arable land to give his cows and stock home-grown food of every kind.

Grass land is not an economical source of food supply, except in certain favoured districts. I have seen it estimated that in Holland and Belgium farmers produce four and five times as much food per acre for their cattle as we do in England, that is, comparing the yields of the heavy fodder, root and straw crops with our average yield of grass, hay, roots and straw. The chief advantage is gained in their use of the fodder crops.

Nothing can be more deplorable than the way in which the grass land is neglected in many districts in England, and almost as a general rule the land laid down to grass during the last 40 years has been so poorly sown, and

subsequently so little cared for, that it is now of low value. And yet that its potential value is considerable even as grass is clearly shown by the experiments at Cockle Park, where by wise and absolutely economical treatment grass land originally worth 5s. per acre rose in a few years to 30s. per acre in annual value. Most of the facts I am recording are, I think, quite well recognised in England; but they are lost sight of to a great extent, from the fact that there are a large number of persons—chiefly politicians—who go about assuring the farmers that all is well and that there are no men in the world like English farmers. I agree: they are splendid men and they have been shamefully treated by these same plausible gentlemen, who want their votes, and in consequence have not the courage to point out to them any short-comings.

I shall now shortly summarise the different points I have endeavoured to make clear, which appear to me to be adversely affecting English agriculture; and then I shall try to form an estimate of the extent to which agriculture (and the nation) would benefit if these defects could be remedied and the industry could be re-organised.

(1) Defective system of agricultural education.

(2) Consequent want of organisation in farm operations.

(3) The lack of a widely extended system of co-operation.

(4) The deleterious effect of the star farmer.

(5) The absence of systematic book-keeping on most farms.

(6) The wasteful treatment of manure.

(7) The fallacy that growing wheat does not pay, but that raising three-year-old bullocks on average mixed farms does pay.

(8) The undue dependence upon grass land instead of arable for the source of cattle food.

(9) The widespread neglect of grass land.—If there is to be grass land let it be the best possible.

(10) The low milk yield of the English dairy herds.

(11) The extravagant feeding of beasts and cows; this certainly makes manure richer in nitrogen, but it is not an economic way of applying nitrogen to the soil.

If these shortcomings could be surmounted, I am sure that the average farmer would derive far greater profit than now from his operations on the land; and if agriculture could be transformed into a highly-organised industry, and the waste of our cultivated land reduced to a minimum, I think the agrarian population would reap advantage under the various headings and to the extent which I now suggest in detail.

£122,000,000 worth of foodstuff (not includ-

ing maize, rice, cattle food or the products of tropical countries) was imported from foreign countries in 1908. *Vide Board of Trade Report.*

Of this total I estimate that the following amounts might well be produced at home by our own agriculturists:

(1)	Butter	£20,000,000
(2)	Cheese	1,325,000
(3)	Eggs	7,000,000
(4)	Poultry	900,000
(5)	Meat (Beef, Pork, Mutton) ...	20,000,000
(6)	Horses	442,000
(7)	Wheat and Flour	26,000,000
(8)	Barley	3,000,000
	Oats and Oatmeal	2,400,000
	Rye, Peas, Beans	1,110,000
(9)	Apples	900,000
(10)	Small fruit	1,400,000
(11)	Vegetables (raw and preserved) ...	1,300,000
(12)	Potatoes	1,400,000
(13)	Tomatoes	£600,000
(14)	Lard and lard imitations	4,000,000
	Total	£91,777,000

The £32,000,000 worth of foodstuff—the difference between the £91,000,000 arrived at in the above table and the total amount imported from foreign countries—should be transferred to our Colonies. The chief item in this £32,000,000 worth would be meat of all kinds, the total importation of meat being some £48,000,000.

For the sake of completeness I append the following table.

IMPORTS OF FOODSTUFFS FROM BRITISH POSSESSIONS

(1)	Butter	£3,821,000
(2)	Cheese	5,359,000
(3)	Eggs	28,000
(4)	Meat	11,930,000
(5)	Horses	118,800
(6)	Wheat and Flour	13,895,000
(7)	Apples	1,112,000
(8)	Bananas	211,000
(9)	Small fruit	135,000
(10)	Lemons, Oranges and Nuts	415,000
(11)	Pears, Plums and various	87,800
(12)	Hay	78,000
(13)	Hops	14,000
(14)	Lard and Margarine	706,000
(15)	Poultry, Game, Onions, etc.	25,175
(16)	Potatoes	5,072,000
(17)	Tomatoes	294,000
(18)	Various	60,000
	Total	£43,371,775

Under the re-distribution and guiding of the sources of supply I suggest that some £30,000,000 worth of foodstuff now brought from foreign countries should be purchased from our colonies. And such tropical fruits as bananas, oranges, lemons and nuts ought to come entirely from British possessions: yet we purchase £6,492,000

worth annually from foreign countries. I have not so far enumerated all the advantages which might accrue to England from scientific organisation. I have put the possible increase of home produce at £91,000,000. I shall proceed to indicate other sources of possible profit, though the figures now will have to be more or less conjectural.

(1) Total suggested increase in home produced foodstuff	£91,000,000
(2) The milk supply of the country ought to be developed to yield a further	5,000,000
(3) If the loss from badly-handled manure were reduced	5,000,000
(4) If English railway rates were as low as on the continent	
(5) If a complete system of co-operation were created this would necessarily involve the reform of the present system of marketing. I have heard shrewd farmers belonging to a strong co-operative society say that this association stood them in half their rental. A complete system all over the country would do much more than this—would, I am convinced, benefit the farmer to the extent of his *whole* rent. This would at once mean some £40,000,000 annually.	
Total benefit to British Agriculture	£101,000,000

Some statisticians have worked out the amount of foodstuff produced per agriculturist. This is interesting, but not, to my mind, the right way

of estimating the produce of the land. For instance, on virgin soil with up-to-date machinery one man could look after a large number of acres and produce a prodigious amount of foodstuff, *quâ* "man-production," but the yield per acre would be small This is actually the case in America.

Again, if the present school of economy maintains, I can almost picture the day when there will be but one British Agriculturist left—zealously watched over by the Government as an object of historic interest. This engaging object might beat the record of production per man, but he would not do much to feed the nation.

Mr. Crawford, in a paper read before the Royal Statistical Society some twelve years ago, estimated that if we grew at home *all* the foodstuffs we imported, we should want in the United Kingdom an increased area of arable land amounting to 23,670,000 acres apportioned as follows:

For Wheat	5,900,000 acres.
„ Beef	4,000,000
„ Mutton	2,200,000
„ Dairy Produce	4,640,000
„ Feeding stuffs for animals ...	6,930,000
	23,670,000 acres.

In my table of suggested increase of home produce I do not mention imported cattle food,

which reduces Mr. Crawford's total by nearly 7,000,000 acres, leaving some 16,000,000 acres as the amount required. I further suggest that we should continue to buy foodstuffs from our own possessions to the extent of some £70,000,000 annually. This will still further reduce Mr. Crawford's 16,000,000 acres.

Finally, we have the 12,000,000 acres of poor grass land to which I have already referred, and this area would go far towards producing the extra foodstuff which I maintain that we could provide.

At present this area is giving a first-class example of the law of diminishing returns! I do not advocate universal "spade cultivation" but I deprecate the widespread waste of land.

It is said that "Every bushel yielded beyond a certain limit is unprofitable." This is quite true, but uncertainty reigns supreme amongst average farmers as to where that limit is, and if the margin cannot be profitably extended in one way, this might quite possibly be done in another. In Denmark the yield of wheat has been raised some 25% during the past few years! I rather believe in the law of "increasing returns:" it is at any rate a healthy dogma to embrace. Take, for instance, the development of our milk supply: if this were organised as it is in Denmark, our farmers would not be forced to endure the fear of having milk

left on their hands; they would feel more inclined to go in for heavy milk yielders instead of light, and the head of cows would steadily increase,—and the more cows, the more manure. Cows kept on grass land do not help to increase the yield of rotation crops to so great an extent, but when they are kept entirely on arable land the yields of all crops go up, so that we have more cows, more pigs, more manure, more corn, mangolds and seeds to the acre.

Turnips would be the crop which would have to be most materially reduced under the new system, and signs are not wanting that these are already beginning to decline in favour.

I am glad to think that it will not be necessary for us to emulate the overworked Belgian, who indeed wins a prodigious return from the soil, but at too great a personal cost.

The development I am advocating is one that is quite possible; one, moreover, that will not run counter to the character of English agriculturists when once they are organised.

I am not for one moment claiming that every individual farm now yielding, say, £3 per acre gross return, could be made to yield double that amount with economic advantage; but I do claim that by paying special attention to the development of the production of those articles of food for which the demand largely exceeds the supply, and by generally adopting intensive

methods of cultivation—particularly on the 220,000 small farms now existing in England—the total quantity of home-grown foodstuff could finally be increased two-fold. To secure this end great changes are necessary: more small farms and small owners must be created.

But I hear the commonplace platitude being thrust at me: the English system of land tenure is the best in the world, and the relations between landlord and tenant are so happy that tenants would not become owners even if they could. No one more than I would deprecate the destruction of the system of landlord and tenant, but—like the House of Lords—the system wants mending and not ending. Evils have crept in—to a great extent during the period of acute agricultural depression—and must be eradicated; and, a matter of even greater importance, the system needs bringing up to date to meet the requirements of the times.

Quite recently, at an important meeting of the Farmers' Club, Mr. Anker Simmons read a paper upon the question of Ownership versus Tenancy.

He said that the question was in reality an economic one, and that it was deplorable that it should be made a political matter at all. He then proceeded to argue in favour of the system of tenancy as opposed to that of ownership.

The paper was most carefully prepared, and

the conclusions were sound and logical from one standpoint—that of the large tenant farmer. They were conclusions to which practically all those who were present could agree, for nearly all were large tenant farmers.

But unfortunately the point of view is too narrow. The tenure of land is a national question, and as such it must be a social and political question as well as an economic one. And every year it will enter more and more into all social and political questions, and this fact tenant farmers should clearly recognise.

But even from the purely economic point of view, though the present system of land tenure is undoubtedly a satisfactory one for the tenant farmer, I think I have made it quite clear in preceding pages that it is by no means as satisfactory to the average run of rural landowners. The net rental received does not represent a fair interest on the landowner's capital, so that it is only a question of a few years before landowners will be forced from business considerations (quite apart from social or political pressure) to take steps to put their finances on a sounder basis. It is for this reason that it is expedient for farmers to support a comprehensive land purchase bill, which would provide machinery that could be used when land was changing hands or on any other occasion when it would prove a boon to the tenant farmer.

I am well aware that from the tenant's point of view his capital is better employed as working capital on a rented farm, than if sunk in the actual purchase or part purchase of the land itself. But the tenant would not be asked to sink his capital in the purchase of land—he would have it as at present for stocking his farm; and the land bank (or its equivalent) would supply the purchase money on easy terms.

Even with the most perfect arrangement I know that the idea of maintaining buildings in repair fills the mind of many a tenant with alarm;—that many average men could hardly find an extra £20 a year to spend upon repairs. But when our agriculture is organised there will be credit banks to help in such matters—though the man who is working on such a narrow margin that he fears that he cannot pay for necessary repairs is clearly under-capitalized for the size of his holding, and cannot at the present moment be doing his full duty by the farm.

Mr. Simmons, to support his contention that the present system of land tenure was the most satisfactory possible, cited tbe case of a man who began life with two hundred acres and was now farming twenty-two thousand acres. It is some consolation to reflect that fortunately there are not many such men in England, for

it is depressing to think of the number of smaller farmers that such a man necessarily deprives of good homes and holdings. The tenant farmer must take a wider view of the land problem; he must realise that the land must be put to the best use for the nation; that it does not exist simply to fatten farmers of the twenty-two thousand acre class. Above all, the large farmers, who form associations and meet together in clubs and who consequently are most in the public eye, must remember that one half of the total number of the farmers of England are men who hold less than 50 acres of land; they must realise that it is the average men who set the standard of agriculture in the country, and so they—these large farmers—should feel themselves morally bound to aid all measures that will benefit the average farmer.

Sixty or seventy years ago the Danish system of land tenure closely resembled ours, but now 82% of the occupiers own their farms—the remaining 12% being tenants, chiefly very large farmers. All classes of agriculturists seem to be satisfied and content—the farmer, whatever the size of his farm; the landowner, who has retained as much land as he wants; and especially the labourer, who has generally a small holding of his own.

In England only 12% of the farmers own the holdings they cultivate. This is altogether too

small a proportion, much smaller than it was in the good old days of English agriculture, before the sturdy yeoman disappeared.

Just as it is an evil for the landed estates of England to fall into the hands of a few, so is it an evil for the large tenant farmer to lay farm to farm until he holds several thousands of acres. In the interest of the agricultural industry as a whole, no landowner should own more than 20,000 acres (of average agricultural land) at the outside, or should have more than one large place; and on the other hand it would be well were it impossible for a tenant to hold more than 1,000 acres. Land of average agricultural quality is here referred to. The absentee farmer is really more injurious to the industry than the absentee landlord. The farm on which the farmer himself lives will always produce more per acre than the one which he runs with a foreman.

A first-class farmer on 500 acres will get as much produce from each acre as he possibly can; he will also be making a good living, but to ensure this he must do his best by the farm. The case is quite different when this man takes a second farm of 500 acres—there is not the same incentive to do his best by the new farm, for it is not necessary to obtain his entire living from it. If he makes a profit of only £100 net this sum will pay him, for it will add an

extra hundred to the income he is making from the old farm on which he lives.

The very large tenant farmer came into existence, or at all events increased in numbers to a great extent, during the period of agricultural distress, at a time when only the good business man with large capital at his disposal could take the larger farms at all, and even he would take them only at a much reduced rental. The poor landowner was not master of the situation—he was thankful to get rid of his farms at almost any price. But, although times have now greatly improved, the area cultivated by these very big farmers still tends to increase. It is a practice harmful to the industry and unjust to the agriculturist at large. It is not a sound argument to say that because this class of farmer makes his business pay he should be allowed without let or hindrance to swallow up farm after farm. It is clearly a case of a very small class of men doing harm not only to their industry, but to the nation. If a large farmer with, say, 500 or 1,000 acres wants to increase his income, let him farm his land more intensively—double the yield per acre instead of taking new farms. Thus he would benefit the country as well as himself, and he would not be preventing others from obtaining land.

It is seriously wrong for a farmer to hold 5,000 acres in a district in which a hard-working and

capable man can make a fair living off 25 acres.

And from a national point of view small farmers of the 25 acre type are much more valuable and useful citizens, and lend a far greater stability to the social fabric, than the labourers who work for the large farmer and who have no direct interest in the land. Yet I know many land agents who still follow the practice of letting a neighbouring small farm to the large tenant, instead of on principle keeping it for a small farmer. These very large farmers are hostile on the whole, I fear, to small holdings—it is in human nature that they should be so; but in many districts the only land available for the creation of small holdings is held by these men. Naturally, in the effort to create these I should be strongly opposed to any direct injustice being done to the very large farmer; he must be treated with every consideration, and in case of disturbance must be given fair and reasonable compensation. But the right of access to the land must not be denied to the many, simply because the process causes some inconvenience to a few men in possession of uneconomically large holdings.

I would rather see the required land taken from the very large farmer than a single field from a man with under 300 acres—which should have been the minimum named in the Small Holdings Act. Depriving such a farm of a

single field—even when full compensation is given—upsets all the farming operations far more than the taking of 100 or 200 acres from a 1,000 acre farm. Of course, however, the best method to pursue, when possible, is for the Small Holdings Authorities to take farms as they come into the market, and so cause no disturbance at all. But quite apart from any consideration of the requirements of the Small Holdings Act, it would be far better for the country if the 1,000 acre farms were divided up into 300, 400, or 500 acre farms.

There may be a few districts in England where the 1,000 acre farm is the economic holding, but generally speaking this large farm was originally held in several separate farms.

I have heard more than one hard-headed Yorkshire farmer say that in his opinion no farmer should hold more than 300 acres of average good land. And I have heard many of the older generation of farmers complain that the number of the smaller farms has been so much reduced that young men have not the same opportunity that formerly existed for acquiring suitably sized holdings upon which to begin their careers; and that, in consequence, the ladder by which such men might rise has now lost many rungs. There seems to be a very general inclination amongst the average run of farmers to take larger farms than they

can either properly capitalize or manage. This tendency must also be put down to the influence of that period of depression when landowners were forced to lower the amount of capital required per acre; with improving agricultural conditions landowners will doubtless be able to remedy this. But nothing can be worse for the land, the landlord, or the farmer himself than an under-capitalized farm.

Before ending this chapter I must deal with the question of land purchase. The tenants on the majority of large properties are undoubtedly content to remain as they are; but the case is different on many of the small estates of under 4,000 acres, which are not paying concerns, and which must in consequence disappear, or at all events must become the property either of men who can make them pay or of men to whom it is immaterial whether they pay or not. In these cases it would certainly be better for the tenants themselves not only to have the opportunity, but to be afforded facilities for purchasing their farms, when the estate comes into the market.

And even in the case of large rural estates—say those over 10,000 acres—the proprietors who depend entirely on the land for their livelihood are finding more and more that they are far richer in capital than in income—in other words that their capital is not well placed, and that it

can be better invested by removing it from the land and putting it into securities. This line of action has also the further advantage that it enables the landowner to place at all events a portion of his capital beyond the reach of socialistic legislation. As I have said before, I sincerely hope that we shall always see landlords and tenants in England; but at the same time it is essential that machinery should exist whereby the tenant would be able to purchase his own holding should it be to his advantage to do so.

Much capital is being made by certain politicians of the Land Holdings Act of 1907. Undoubtedly this has some good features, and I have not heard of its affecting adversely the relations of landowner and tenant, as some feared it would do. It secures to the farmer great latitude of cropping, or at least it is supposed to do so; but in this respect I fear the Act is somewhat nullified by the narrow-mindedness and want of elasticity on the part of many of our valuers.

With this increased freedom of cropping a much greater degree of inspection on the part of the land agent will be required to see that the land is not let down; but this will be no drawback. It is to be regretted that the Act does little to protect the small farmer from excessive damage by game. It provides, in the

case of a farmer with land adjacent to coverts, that reasonable compensation shall be paid for damage done by pheasants; but in the event of rabbits coming out of the said coverts in their thousands and devastating the surrounding fields, the farmer can put in no claim—the Ground Game Act is supposed to afford him sufficient protection. It does not however do so. Take the case of a small farmer whose whole time should be given to the cultivation of the soil: how can he find opportunity to snare rabbits, or to shoot them? On the first shot the rabbits all retire to the wood, where he cannot follow them. A large farmer can employ a rabbit catcher; this a small farmer cannot do.

The branch of Agricultural Reform that rests entirely with the individual farmer is that of cheapening the cost of production; we are not an economical race, and there is room for enormous saving in this direction amongst the general run of farmers.

Co-operation would materially help to this end. English farmers must remember this indisputable fact: that without unity they will never be in as strong a position as the highly organised foreign farmers; the advent of a tariff, even were it double the amount any government would dare to impose, could not alter this fact.

I have endeavoured in this chapter to point

out the various shortcomings that exist in our system of agriculture in the hope that my criticism may lead those most concerned to give these shortcomings their serious attention. It is too often said that all that English agriculture wants is protection—but Tariff Reform by itself will not regenerate the industry if the other evils I have referred to are left unremedied. And let those men who maintain that nothing can be done to mend English agriculture, so long as the present low prices prevail, remember this—that the Danish agriculturists, wisely backed by their Government, have effected the complete organisation of their agriculture in spite of the fact that over a long range of years the prices of farm produce have been some 20% lower in Denmark than in England.

There is one important point that I must not omit. In the chapter dealing with landowners, I said that they ought to see either that a portion of their subscriptions to party funds should be ear-marked for the purpose of advancing the cause of agriculture in Parliament, or that a separate fund should be started with this object; and I must repeat the same words in connection with the farmers. They should ensure that a certain number of tenant farmers are returned to Parliament, so that when questions affecting land are before the

House, men shall be present who make their whole living out of the land.

The first thing necessary is a special Parliamentary fund.

About 170,000 farmers occupy farms of over 50 acres in England and Wales: if each man could be induced to subscribe 2s. per annum to such a fund an income of £17,000 would be provided—not a very large amount, but sufficient to begin with and to do much good to the cause of agriculture. Or, better still, if every occupier of agricultural land—there are 450,000—could be induced to give 1s. per annum a fund of £22,500 would be provided.

I should be grieved if this chapter gave the impression that I am belittling English farmers as a whole. I think it is wonderful how they have stood up against adversity—how, disunited, they have nevertheless withstood the competition of new countries, and that in spite of the fact that they have been more than neglected by their own government, while their foreign brothers were given every possible aid. Further, they have had to pay more than double the railway rates paid by continental farmers.

Yet with all this the standard of comfort and style of living is certainly much higher in England than amongst the continental agriculturists, with the sole exception of Denmark. This does not however preclude the fact that

there is still room for much improvement. As the beginning of the 19th century saw a great movement amongst farmers, due to a large extent to the efforts of that wonderful man, Coke of Norfolk;* so it is to be hoped that the early years of the 20th century already see the beginning of a movement which will in the end secure the complete organisation of our greatest industry.

Practical farmers who read this chapter may not agree with all my criticisms, but the staunchest upholder of existing conditions cannot escape from this main fact, that it is the duty of the farmers to feed the nation, and that they are feeding at the present time barely one-half of the population, and, in the case of wheat, only one-fifth.

If it is the duty of the farmers to feed the people, it must be made reasonably profitable for them to do so; and clearly it is the duty of those who rule the country so to alter agricultural conditions that it will be possible for the cultivators of our soil to perform their duty and feed the bulk of the population, as the cultivators of the soil are now doing in continental countries, whether protected or free.

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* *Note.* Mrs. Stirling's "Coke of Norfolk" (John Lane) is so instructive and, in my opinion, so important a contribution to agricultural literature that one may hope to see it republished ere long in a cheap edition to enable it to reach a large public, including practical farmers.

CHAPTER III

THE RURAL LABOURER

IN my chapter on education I shall try to make clear how unpractical is the training given in our elementary schools, and in no class is this more evident than among the sons of the rural labourers.

It would not be reasonable to expect a child —considering the conditions—to get home training of any value in our overcrowded cities; but in the country conditions are somewhat different, and one feels that there should be more opportunity than there is for the children to learn at home. That they do not, is largely due to the fact that the present generation of parents, themselves products of our modern education, are not capable of teaching them.

Many persons connected with local education still oppose the introduction of certain types of instruction into the school, contending that this instruction is best given in the home. This contention may be true in principle, but the attitude is harmful, nevertheless, to the very cause which such persons have at heart.

It is wiser to recognise the sad fact that the wage-earner's children of to-day are usually taught nothing in their homes; and, instead of wasting time in vain regrets, it would be well to see what steps can be taken to supply in school hours the needed practical instruction. And if practical manual instruction were to be embodied in the school course, it may well prove that 20 years of such education might recreate those conditions which would again make home instruction possible.

Consider the case of the ordinary rural labourer. By far the greater number have no land to cultivate for themselves; very many, even of the married men, make a change of home almost yearly; and when the labourer is lucky enough to have an allotment this is often so far away from the cottage that the family can do little work on it. The children of these men have clearly little chance of learning any practical agriculture at home.

Now the Education Authorities can do much in giving the right bias to education, by providing continuation classes, farm schools, etc.; but the fact remains that the best training for a country lad is to work with his father on his own plot of land, so that the development of small holdings has also an important educational value.

Access to land must also be the chief induce-

ment offered to the more intelligent youths to encourage them to stay upon the land.

In times past common lands were to be found all over the country, and the majority of the labouring class had certain common rights. These commons furnished good runs for the labourer's poultry, keep for his few sheep, and even for a cow or two.

Access to this land was of great value educationally for the reasons I have pointed out, and also as a means of supplementing the low agricultural wage; above all, as a means for working on to better things.

It is sorrowful to have to say it, but the labouring man does not now possess the opportunity that he had in days gone by to improve his condition. His wage may have increased somewhat, but all his interest in the land has been removed by the enclosure of the common lands.

As the agricultural labourer was deprived of direct interest in the land, so he became less intelligent, and a less good worker.

The incentive to effort produced by holding even a small allotment is most striking, provided that the land is situated in a suitable place. It is astonishing what a large sum a good labourer will succeed in putting by, before he reaches the age of 30, if only he can get hold of a piece of land.

From the point of view of scientific cultivation, perhaps, the common land was not being put to the best use, but an effort might have been made to improve its treatment. It was not necessary to dispossess the labouring class. Had the government of the day possessed foresight they would have stayed their hand and not have allowed a large class having no connection with the land to come into existence, thus increasing that great danger to the stability of society, a landless proletariat.

But apart from this point of view the policy was of itself an unrighteous one, for it was the robbery of the poor legalized by Acts of Parliament.

It is remarkable that during the period in which this disastrous policy was pursued in England, a contrary course was being adopted in many continental countries, and peasant ownership was created or increased. In Prussia the great landowners made an attempt to swallow up the small proprietors, but the king and his great minister, Stein, were too wise to allow the movement to make headway.

We do not study as we should the history of land and of the tillers of the soil. In the ordinary history courses too much attention is given to long strings of facts which are soon forgotten, and not sufficient time is allotted to the lessons which these facts teach,

or to the history of social conditions and to the great part that land plays in the development of every nation.

Wat Tyler's rebellion, for example, is recorded in most histories as a mere rising of peasants, but to understand its inward meaning, and the feeling that actuated these rustics, it is necessary to read such a book as Mr. Jesse Collings' "Land Reform," a volume which should become a national classic.

Land provides us with our whole means of subsistence and it is well to know something about it!

No reference to the condition of the rural labourer would be complete without some short mention of that veteran champion of the cause of agriculture and the betterment of the rural labourer, Mr. Jesse Collings, the member for the Edgbaston division of Birmingham.

For years his has been the only voice raised in favour of land reform; he has reiterated in season and out of season, in the House of Commons and outside it, the demand that Parliament and the nation at large should pay more attention to the condition of the agricultural industry and that of the rural labourer. Himself the son of a labourer, he has been a strong advocate of the policy which he believed would most benefit the labourer and agriculture as a whole—the creation of a class of small

freeholders. Though the interests of agriculture have always been nearest his heart—believing as he does a flourishing agriculture to be essential to the welfare of the nation—he has ever shown himself an imperialist in the truest and best sense of the word; he has consistently put the welfare of the people before the interests of party.

At last, after a hard struggle of upwards of half a century, he has lived to see the Unionist Party definitely accept his policy for facilitating the purchase of land by occupiers of all descriptions.

The old proverb says, "Better late than never," but it yet remains to be seen if the Unionist party have not delayed too long in listening to Mr. Collings' advice.

It remains to be seen if the nation at large will now give the time to carry out a policy of land reform which ought to have been begun years ago; or whether the Liberal party, with their counter policy of nationalizing the land, will not upset the Unionist schemes.

The condition of the rural labourer was possibly at its lowest ebb during the years immediately preceding Joseph Arch's movement. Rural labourers were then so wretchedly paid that foreign writers used to point to the state of the farm labourer as a disgrace to England. The wages of urban workmen had been rising

steadily, thanks largely to the efforts of the Trades Unions, but it seemed impossible to induce the rural labourers to combine—circumstances were all against their doing so.

Still, when the right man—in the person of Joseph Arch—appeared, he succeeded in obtaining a greater amount of cohesion than has been known before or since, and his union had the most practical result of raising the wages of farm labourers throughout the kingdom,—East Anglia, Lincolnshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, varying in degree according to the local strength of Arch's Union. Thus began the improving of the general condition.

Unfortunately, this improvement is not at all uniform, and there are still many counties where the wages are deplorably low. Thirteen and fourteen shillings a week is not enough upon which to bring up a family—even admitting that the house rent is low.

In Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and the Northern counties generally higher wages prevail, averaging about 18s. per week all round: and it is safe to assume that 18s. per week in the country is fully equal to 22s. per week in a city, while, over and above the question of hard cash, the country man has undoubtedly in many cases a considerable quantity of garden produce, which makes a great difference to the healthy feeding of the family. It is fairly safe, I think, to conclude

that most families of rural labourers have, under normal conditions, sufficient food to keep them in a fit condition, which, alas! is not the case with a large percentage of the families of urban unskilled workmen.

It is regrettable that more weekly budgets are not available to show the household expenditure of the rural labourer. I have only been able to find one or two, which I tabulate below; and for the sake of comparison I include in the tables some examples of urban labourers' household budgets which I have taken from Lady Bell's instructive book, "At the Works."

I also quote various paragraphs from Mr. Seebohm Rowntree's work, "Lessons from Belgium," as bearing on the subject before us.

"The Belgian small-holders are quite as well fed as even the highest class of town workers."

The next paragraph applies to urban workmen and not to country labourers.

"The Belgian workman devotes a larger proportion of his income to food; he can do this because his rent is less, 11·7% of total income as against 18% in York."

It is a very important fact for rural workmen to realise that, in spite of the possibility of higher wages in towns, there is actually a large

proportion—Lady Bell shows it to be 30% in Middlesborough, Mr. Rowntree 25% in York—of workmen, who from one cause or another cannot provide their families with enough food for the maintainance of full physical efficiency.

"The Belgians eat less meat, but more fish, twice as much butter, but only one quarter as much dripping."

"The English eat six times as much sugar."

"The Belgians eat 40% more bread; more, and a larger variety of vegetables."

"In Belgium families with an income of 14s. 6½d. per week are, as a whole, better nourished than families in York whose average income is 19s. 8d."

The former choose their food much better, and whereas 1s. buys 240 grains of protein and 7,124 calories, 1s. only buys 179 grains of protein and 5,585 calories in York.

"The Belgian working class spend much less on clothes than do the English, chiefly because the standard of dress is decidedly lower."

The foreigners are sensibly and sufficiently clothed, but they do not like putting more money than is necessary into clothes or furniture, as the money so sunk becomes unproductive capital. This study of the cost of living is most important—"because it may help thoughtful employers to determine whether the wages they are paying constitute a living

wage, and enable us to say whether any given families possess a margin of income available for thrift, or whether, in expecting them to save money, we are expecting what can only be done at the cost of physical deterioration."

AGRICULTURAL LABOURER

Income 14s. per week
(Number in family not stated)

	s.	d.
Rent of cottage	1	9
Bread	2	6
Firing	2	6
Meat	3	0
Ale and Tobacco	1	3
Tea, Sugar, Soap...	2	6
	13	6

In addition there was the produce from the garden.

The average income of a labourer's family, assuming that the man is in regular work (losing $3\frac{1}{2}$ weeks from bad weather, work on allotments, and holidays), and that there is no other bread winner, is as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
$40\frac{1}{2}$ weeks' labour at 13s. $1\frac{1}{2}$d.	26	11	$6\frac{3}{4}$
4 ,, ,, ,, 16s.	3	4	0
4 ,, ,, ,, 24s.	4	16	0
Profit on allotment, garden, pigs,	7	0	0
Charities, gleanings, etc.		18	0
	£42	9	$6\frac{3}{4}$

Equals 16s. 4d. per week.

The following is the yearly expenditure of a labourer with a wife and four young children.

	£	s.	d.
Rent (landlord pays rates, etc.) ...	3	18	0
Coal	2	12	0
Faggots		12	0
Bread and Flour	7	16	0
Bacon	6	12	0
Light		9	0
Sugar	1	0	0
Ditto for preserving and fruit ...		15	0
Rice and Tapioca		16	0
Tea	1	4	0
Butter	1	10	0
Lard and Suet	1	6	0
Washing Materials	1	6	0
Cheese	1	5	0
Blacking and Black lead ...		2	6
Salt and Pepper, etc.		4	6
Vinegar for pickling		3	6
Sick Benefit Club	1	0	6
Clothing Club		13	0
Writing Materials and Stamps		13	0
Boots (mending not included) ...	2	5	0
	£36	8	6

URBAN LABOURER

Mrs. A.'s Budget

Income 18s. 6d. Family Three

	s.	d.		s.	d.	Summary	s.	d.
Rent	5	6	Yeast		1			
Coals	2	4	Milk		3			
Insurance ...		7	1 box Globe Polish		1			
Clothing ...	1	0	1 lb. Soap ...		3	Rent ...	5	6

	s.	d.		s.	d.	Summary	s.	d.
Meat	1	6	1 packet Gold dust		1	Insurance		7
1 st. Flour ...	1	5	3 oz. Tobacco ...		9	Coal ...	2	4
¼ st. Bread meal		4½	½ st. Potatoes ...		3	House		8
1 lb. Butter ...	1	1	Onions		1	Food ...	7	5
½ lb. Lard ...		2½	Matches		1	Clothing	1	0
1 lb. Bacon ...		9	Lamp Oil... ...		2	Tobacco		9
4 lb. Sugar ...		8	Debt		3	Debt ...		3
½ lb. Tea ...		9		18	6		18	6

Mrs. B.'s Budget

Income £1 1 0. Family Three

	s.	d.		s.	d.	Summary	s.	d.
Rent	5	6	1 Tin of Milk ...		3½			
Coals... ...	2	2	1 lb. Soap... ...		3			
Gas Coke ...		3½	1 lb. Starch ...		4			
Insurance ...		7	3 oz. Tobacco		9			
Clothing ...	1	6	1 box Globe Polish		1	Rent ...	5	6
Meat	1	8	1 box Zebra Polish		1	Insurance		7
1 st. Flour ...	1	5	Firewood... ...		4	Coals and		
¼ st. Bread meal		4½	Blue		0½	Coke	2	5½
Yeast... ...		1	Lamp Oil... ...		2	House	1	3½
1 lb. Butter ...	1	2	Matches & Candles		2	Food ...	7	7½
½ lb. Lard ...		2½	Debt		0	Clothing	1	6
1 lb. Bacon ...		9	Cat's Meat ...		1	Tobacco		9
½ lb. Tea ...		9	½ st. Potatoes ...		3	Debt ...	1	0
4 lb. Sugar ...		8	Bath brick ...		1	Firewood		4
				£1	1 0½		£1	1 0½

Mrs. C.'s. Budget

Family Seven. Income £1 6 0 per week

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Rent	5	0	Summary.		
Sick Club and Insurance	1	6			
Coals, Light, Firewood	3	0	Food	12	11
Tea, Sugar, etc.... ...	2	5	Rent	5	0
Rice, Peas, and Barley...		6	Insurance	1	6
Butter, Lard and Bacon	2	6	Coals and Firing ...	3	0
Flour	2	10	Clothing	2	6

	s.	d.
Butcher's Meat	3	6
Soap, Soda and Blue ...		6½
Milk	1	2
Boots and Clothing ...	2	6
Sundries	6	0
£1	5	11½
Balance to credit		0½
£1	6	0

Summary	s.	d.
House		6½
Sundries		6
£1	5	11½
Balance to credit		0½
£1	6	0

The condition of the rural labourer and its amelioration is a very large subject; but the following would seem to be the chief points to consider:

(1) How best to give back to the rural labourer that direct interest in the land which he had before the millions of acres of common land were enclosed.

The provision of small holdings for the labouring class, with a view to turning as many labourers as possible into small farmers, making their entire living off their holdings, will do much in this direction. This policy has been carried out successfully in many continental countries, and farmers need have no apprehensions on the score of shortage of labour, as the sons of these small holders will provide a most excellent type of worker.

Further provision must be made for men who will not make their entire living off their holdings, but who will work, say for 150 days in the year, for some neighbouring farmer.

And allotments must be provided for the regular rural labourer on which he can work in his spare time, aided by various members of his family.

Allotments have been available for many years past, but they have been by no means generally successful; in many cases they have gradually got into the hands of one or two men—usually village tradesmen. I think this want of success is often due to attempting entirely unsuitable croppings. I remember one man who would persist in growing wheat on his one acre, hiring a labourer to do ploughing, harrowing, etc., and naturally at the end of the year he had little profit to show. Undoubtedly it often pays to grow a little barley for the pigs, but I believe most in potatoes and other vegetables, as, even where there is not a good market for them, these supply the family with wholesome food that could easily represent £8 or £10 in value. I believe that the model allotments run by the Oxford County Council are doing much to improve the cropping and treatment of allotments generally in that county.

A specific capable of general application is undoubtedly that of providing more good cottages with gardens for the married men, and thus reducing the floating rural population; and though this pre-supposes a landowner with a good deal of capital wherewith to build cottages,

still I think much more could be done in this direction than is being done. I do not believe it is sufficiently realised on what easy terms money can be obtained through the Board of Agriculture. In the case of the ordinary mixed farm, one cottage per 100 acres is about the usual ratio; but I know of large farms where the ratio has within recent years been raised to one cottage to every 50 acres, thus benefiting the landowner, the tenant and the labourer. In such a case the labourers are nearly all married men, who do not flit at the end of the year as is generally the case with unmarried men.

Another and most important means of directly interesting the labourer in the results of farming operations would be by extending the system of profit-sharing. A few men, I believe, are doing this, with good results, and Lord Rayleigh even goes so far as to encourage his men to invest their savings in the farm, thus securing a share in the farm capital and a limited voice in the management. I think this is an excellent experiment and might prove most successful where a landlord is farming, but it is hardly to be expected that tenant farmers will follow this lead.

There is another development of the profit-sharing system which I tried on one of my large

farms, namely, that of giving a bonus to the men. I cannot speak very definitely as to the result, as it was in vogue for one year only before the farm was let, but on the whole it seemed to work satisfactorily. The bonus given to the men did not wholly depend upon the farm making a profit, for it seemed unfair that they should receive no benefit for extra good work simply because the farm showed no profit owing to circumstances which the labourer could not control. So, of the bonus, 25% was affected by the profit or loss on the farm, the other 75% was given as the reward of merit, for general willingness and obedience, capacity and attention to work. For instance, a man would lose marks for neglecting machinery, horses, etc.

This bonus worked out in most cases at about 5s. per month and was paid monthly, and the men seemed to like the extra bit of pocket money they received; any act of carelessness was brought home to them forcibly when only 3s. or 4s. or 4s. 6d. was given instead of the full 5s. and this course proved a means of fixing responsibility.

I mention this experiment for what it is worth. It would be interesting to see it tried by several people and over a period of years.

(2) How to make the rural labourer realise that he is an integral and important factor in the agricultural industry, and that what benefits the

industry should and must inevitably benefit himself.

The provision of small holdings, as touched upon earlier in this chapter, will also apply here, for the more the labourer produces the more he will be interested in seeing fair prices maintained for agricultural produce.

Doubtless the adoption of a system of profit-sharing would also help. I have heard a labourer suggest that there should be a minimum wage, and that the increase should vary with the price of wheat; but this would not be practicable, and the question of how to reach the rural labourer and bring him into the agricultural movement still remains a difficult problem deserving of the most careful attention, for numerically the labouring class is the most important in the agricultural community. To this end the development of small ownership, if not unduly forced, will certainly greatly help.

One must clearly recognise the existence of an apparent divergence in the interests of farmer and labourer before it is possible to suggest measures which would tend to minimise that divergence. The labourer unduly magnifies the difference of interests. The farmer wants low wages and high prices; the rural labourer wants high wages and low prices.

The difference in the attitude of farmers and labourers towards the question of the cost of

food will disappear as the labourers themselves more and more become producers. And farmers will not cavil at the rate of wages if a really capable race of workers can be turned out by a more practical education and improved conditions, particularly if the pursuit of agriculture can be made more remunerative to the average farmer by the scientific organising of the industry.

Taking things just as they are, the attitude of the labourers towards the price of foodstuffs would be much affected if they would combine—for example, if they would run co-operative mills and bakehouses. The wheat would be bought wholesale from the farmers and the tariff of the middlemen saved, and there would be the offal to divide amongst the members.

This is a suggestion that was made to me by a labouring man, and I believe that it could be carried out in many districts. This man further maintained that, as bread is the chief item of food for the labourer's family, this would mean a saving of 20 or 30% in the yearly food bill, taking wheat at 35s. a quarter as the basis.

Landowners also could do a great deal more than now to make the labourers realise the part they might and should play in the general advance of agriculture. There is no doubt that the practice, which obtains on some estates, of the landowner retaining possession

of the labourers' cottages instead of letting them to the farmers, acts most beneficially. I know that there are great difficulties in the way, and I realise particularly how hard it might be to originate the practice; still it could be done by degrees. And I believe that labourers would be willing to pay direct to the landowner a higher rental than now prevails, especially if a good garden were invariably attached to the cottage; and thus cottage finance might in time be put on a business basis.

Further, on principle I think it is derogatory to the labourer not to pay rates, and if it be constitutionally wrong for a man to pay taxes and have no vote, so is it wrong for a man to vote and pay no taxes; but in practice there are many difficulties in the way of making all cottage holders pay their rates.

(3) How to secure to the labourer better wages, especially in those counties where little increase has occurred. Again, as in the two preceding problems, must small holdings be referred to. If small holdings become available to the extent their advocates would wish, and a smart labouring man can make a living equivalent to £60 a year off his 20 or 30 acres, that man will not work for another man for £45 per annum. The development, therefore, of small holdings on sound lines should affect

beneficially the wages of the labourers as a whole. This is a very important point for the labourers themselves to understand. I fear, however, it will be a long time before small holdings can be developed to such an extent as to attain this end. Meanwhile, a far quicker way would be for the labourers themselves to combine as they did in the days of Arch, though carefully avoiding any hostile feeling towards the other members of the industry.

The point which I hope farmers will remember is that high wages do not necessarily mean dear labour. In Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and the North generally, wages are much higher than in the Southern counties, yet labour is no dearer, for the labourer is a better man owing to his better food, clothing, etc., and more than repays by his intelligence and capacity the extra amount given him in wages.

(4) How to secure to the rural labourer increased opportunities. The answer to this question really constitutes a summary of what has gone before. By "opportunities" is meant opportunities of earning better wages, of obtaining land and a home of his own—either as out-and-out owner or as tenant with absolute security of tenure,* and of the provision of better education

* The rural labourer should clearly understand that at present the amount which he pays to the County Council for any holding he takes, pays for the purchase of the land,—not for his own possession, but that it may be presented as a free gift to the County Council.

for his children.

It will perhaps be easiest to illustrate my meaning by roughly outlining ideal conditions in which all these opportunities would be provided for the rural labourer, an ideal at all events not impracticable, and one which has been found capable of realisation in other countries.

This ideal, in fact, only sketches out what it is possible to do by scientifically organising the rural population and the agricultural industry.

Education is the basis.

The type of instruction given in rural schools has been remodelled; it has become more practical, more manual; it expresses itself in terms of daily life. Facilities for continuation classes exist, farm schools have been created, every encouragement is given to the scholars to improve themselves.

The teachers, seeing that access to land has been made easy, and that, in consequence, the country youth has something to look forward to, spare no pains in instilling into the minds of their pupils a love of the country and of country life. They teach them that the country is the natural and most healthy habitat of man, and that life in the country is cheaper than in the town. Further, that if they settle in colonies, and as the country population in-

creases, amusements will be possible that are now little dreamed of.

Agriculture has been industrialized, and every possible subsidiary industry encouraged; sugar works, tar works, wood pulping mills, potato spirit distilleries are giving employment to thousands.

Landowners and farmers benefiting by the organisation of the agricultural industry are willing to pay higher wages, especially to those youths who have taken advanced courses of instruction and proved themselves of superior intelligence.

It is better understood that even in the agricultural industry it is true economy to pay for brains. These labourers will give the best of their energy to the farmers for say 10, 15, or 20 years, working well and putting by every possible penny to achieve the goal before them—a nice small holding with cottage and buildings complete.

From about 40 or 50 years of age the labourer will be working on his own account; perhaps finding it necessary to do a certain number of days of outside work in the course of the year, but preferably working entirely for himself. In either case he would help to provide labour for the farmer, in that he would be bringing up sturdy sons under the most favourable conditions for turning out efficient workmen.

With reasonable luck and with the assistance of fully developed co-operation, a system of credit banks, etc., this man should have all haunting fear of the workhouse removed, and should know that he will end his days peaceably under the roof that for so many years has given shelter to himself and his family.

That small holdings, where extended on sound lines, work to this end is amply proved by studying the results in Worcestershire and other counties in which they have been properly developed.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURE

"THE subject of paramount importance in our correspondence and in the hearings is education. In every part of the United States there seems to be one mind, on the part of those capable of judging, on the necessity of redirecting the rural schools. There is no such unanimity on any other subject. It is remarkable with what similarity of phrase the subject has been discussed in all parts of the country before the commission. Everywhere there is a demand that education have relation to living, that the schools should express the daily life, and that in the rural districts they should educate by means of agriculture and country life subjects. It is recognised that all difficulties resolve themselves in the end into a question of education.

"The schools are held to be largely responsible for ineffective farming, lack of ideals, and the drift to town. This is not because the rural

schools, as a whole, are declining, but because they are in a state of arrested development and have not yet put themselves in consonance with all the recently changed conditions of life. The very forces that have built up the city and town school have caused the neglect of the country school. It is probable that the farming population will willingly support better schools as soon as it becomes convinced that the schools will really be changed in such a way as to teach persons how to live.

"The feeling that agriculture must color the work of rural public schools is beginning to express itself in the interest in nature study, in the introduction of classes in agriculture in high schools and elsewhere, and in the establishment of separate or special schools to teach home and farm subjects. These agencies will help to bring about the complete construction of which we have been speaking. It is specially important that we make the most of the existing public school system, for it is this very system that should serve the real needs of the people. The real needs of the people are not alone the arts by which they make a living, but the whole range of their customary activities. As the home is the center of our civilization so the home subjects should be the center of every school.

"The most necessary thing now to be done for public school education in terms of country

life is to arouse all the people to the necessity of such education, to co-ordinate the forces that are beginning to operate and to project the work beyond the schools for youth into continuation schools for adults. The schools must represent and express the community in which they stand, although, of course, they should not be confined to this community. They should teach health and sanitation even if it is necessary to modify the customary teaching of physiology. The teaching should be visual, direct and applicable. Of course, the whole tendency of the schools will be ethical if they teach the vital subjects truthfully; but particular care should be taken that they stand for the morals of the pupils and of the communities.

"The education motive has been taken into all kinds of work with the people, directly in their homes and on their farms, and it reaches mature persons as well as youths. Beyond and behind all educational work there must be an aroused intelligent public sentiment; to make this statement is the most important work immediately before us. The whole country is alive with educational activity. While this activity may all be good, it nevertheless needs to be directed and correlated, and all the agencies should be more or less federated.

"The arousing of the people must be accomplished in terms of their daily lives or of their

welfare. For the country people this means that it must be largely in terms of agriculture."—*Report of U.S.A. Commission on Country Life.*

Before I deal with education as it affects agriculture I must briefly touch upon its past history, leaving out as far as possible any reference to subjects that are at all controversial. Previous to Mr. Balfour's Education Act of 1902, the " dual system " existed in full force, that is, there were the board schools, and the denominational schools, and of the latter by far the greater number were in the main under the control of the Church of England.

Our system of education had grown in a most haphazard way into its then condition. The church did her utmost for many years to fulfil educational requirements, but our population increased too fast and the task became too great for her; and more and more board schools were created.

On the whole the standard of education was on the up grade, or, perhaps, viewing the practical results, it would be more accurate to say that the cost of educating each child steadily increased, till the Church of England could no longer stand the financial strain. This is the important point to remember,—the church schools could no longer keep pace with the board schools in the race for so-called educa-

tional efficiency.

Just before the Act of 1902 less money was being expended per child in church schools than in board schools, and according to many authorities the standard of teachers was lower, a natural consequence of their being paid less. There was every indication that the system of voluntary schools was no longer workable, and that a great national system of schools under one control was necessary if England wished to keep her place in the world of education.

Mr. Balfour's Act provided this single control, and greatly improved the administrative side of our system, but it is regrettable that it did not boldly put an end to every vestige of the dual system. On the contrary, it attempted to prop up the voluntary schools, and herein is to be found the root of the evils from which we are now suffering.

When the church schools were really voluntary, though assisted by State grants, in practice very few Nonconformists objected to the religious teaching being Church of England in character; but their attitude changed at once when they had to contribute directly by the rates for the support of church schools, and actively to support the religious teaching in which formerly they had only passively acquiesced.

Hence the country is suffering from a religious and political dispute, which is carried on by the

extreme Churchmen and by Nonconformists to the great sorrow of all moderate men, who are anxious to see this question settled, so that the necessary development of our educational system may go on unimpeded by questions that are largely outside the sphere of education.

It is my great fear that the continued fighting over the religious question will in the end make moderate men on both sides, from sheer weariness of the contest, acquiesce in secular education. And nothing could be more disastrous for the future of England than to have the Bible banished from the school.

All who feel this to be the case should strain every nerve to secure suitable Bible teaching of a given standard throughout the country. Committees could be formed in every district whose business it would be to see that the Bible teaching came up to this given standard, and that no atheist or improperly qualified teacher was permitted to give this instruction.

Having made these preliminary remarks I will now turn to the question of education itself, and then to education and its bearing on agriculture.

The first requisite is a strong public opinion to demand a far higher type of instruction than is now being given. By higher instruction I mean instruction which shall be more manual, and shall have a practical bearing on the pupil's

future life, and which moreover shall be carried on in some form to a more advanced age than it is at present. Although latterly there have been some encouraging signs, still it has to be admitted that so far this much-desired public opinion is practically non-existent. And such interest as there is, is rather in the question of how to reduce the cost of education, than in that of raising the standard of that education and making it effective to the fullest extent.

Millions of money have been spent on education, and yet the present race of artisans is not strikingly superior to the past generation—in fact, there are many indications that the contrary is the case. The class of unskilled labourers has not improved, and I have no hesitation in maintaining that the rural labourer is not as good as he was. The defects of the system are still more glaring in the rising generation of girls and young women, who no longer receive that valuable home training which used to be so important a feature, and further are given no practical instruction at school to make up for this loss. The consequence is that they leave school with a smattering of book-learning, but unable to help their overworked mothers, incapable of properly tending their younger brothers and sisters, and incapable of looking after homes, husbands and children of their own. Many of those persons who take an

active part in educational reform do not study as they should the way in which the poor live. Everyone cannot get this information at first hand, but all interested in the subject can read such books as, "A Poor Man's House," by Stephen Reynolds, "At the Works," by Lady Bell, "The Town Child," by Reginald Bray, and "An Englishman's Castle," by Miss Loane. As a nation we are not of a scientific turn of mind: when we endeavoured to formulate our educational system there was no solemn conclave to consider what should be the ultimate aim of education, what type of citizen would most benefit the country. When it was realized that something must be done, the old dame school was taken as the basis, patched, altered and added to, till what we are pleased to call the present system of elementary education was built up—a mode that until recently could hardly be recognised as a system.

But things have gone on thus for so long that we must now accept this kaleidoscopic medley, and must hope that in the continued turning of the kaleidoscope will result the resolution of all the separate parts into a homogeneous whole.

Our methods of education are steadily improving, slowly in some directions, faster in others. The outlook is encouraging, but the progress would be much faster if it were recognised that expenditure on education is really

the best investment of capital and should not be looked upon as merely absorbing so much of our national income. The return on that capital will be high if the standard of the rising generation is raised, and the consequent wealth-producing power increased.

And we must not think only of the money-making side of the question; it is in itself important, but "we should not grudge expenditure to secure in our children a dynasty of liberty, freedom and uplift," as Dr. Robertson, the Canadian commissioner of agriculture, so rightly said when urging the importance of the moral and ethical side of education.

Cut-and-dried text book instruction is cheap from the accountant's point of view, for teachers can deal with much larger classes than is the case when the instruction requires more individual attention, and the advocates for this academic instruction put forward the formula—"We must have generous general education." In many cases it is neither generous nor general, and it is really costly, because it turns out an altogether undue proportion of children who can use neither their hands nor their brains.

Probably the most expensive elementary school in the world in cost per scholar is the one in connection with the University of Chicago; Mr. Dewey created it and gives a full account of it in his excellent work, "The School and the

State." Its methods are the very antithesis of those which still prevail in England. In this school the teaching is from the concrete to the abstract—through the hand to the eye to the brain. Manual instruction is the basis of the whole system; for instance, in carding wool and in weaving the children learn the history and geography connected with that important industry; they use crude instruments and not only are encouraged to, but actually do invent improved methods of handling the material; they cook their own meals; in the class room the pupils are allowed to discuss the lesson as much as they please, as such discussion rightly guided is of great educational value, and books are resorted to only as the need for them is realised by the children themselves.

This school has been in full work for a good many years and the results are, I believe, most satisfactory.

The cost of giving this instruction works out at something like £20 per child per annum. Though interesting and valuable as an experiment the high cost makes it impracticable as a system of education for all elementary schools; even in America neither the public purse nor public opinion would endure so high a rate of expenditure on any large scale. But such an example should be invaluable to those who direct the education of our country, and

should incite them to try to embody as much of that type of instruction as is compatible with economy, common sense, and the opportunities afforded.

County Councils have now the practical control of education. Some councils are doing their work most admirably, striving for efficiency, and avoiding the pitfalls of unwarrantable extravagance on the one hand, and ruinous parsimony on the other; but all County Councils do not work with this wisdom. There are many which, while they own the letter of the law, are dead to the spirit, and it is safe to say that the majority of county councillors are more concerned in keeping down the education rate than in developing education. They are content to let the Board of Education set the standard, and only move when that Board compels them. It is right for them to be careful in their trusteeships of public money, but surely it is still more their duty to see that the country gets its money's worth; and above all, that the instruction given is educating the pupils to be the most useful citizens possible.

The education of each child costs about £3 7s. and if, by wisely spending an extra 5s., 10s. or 15s. per child, County Councillors can make the original expenditure of £3 7s. vastly more effective, will they not be fulfilling the spirit of their trust far more truly than by

adhering to the hard and fast principle of "keep down the education rate"?

In America £6 per child is the average annual cost of education; I do not say that it will ever be necessary for us to pay as much as that sum, but we shall have to face a decidedly higher rate per child than at present exists, before we can get our education into a satisfactory condition.

It is fair to County Councillors to admit that in many districts, even if the County Council were ready to spend more upon education, the rates have already reached their limit, and further revenue from this source is well nigh impossible, but this does not constitute a valid excuse for inaction.

It is to be hoped that the Development fund, if properly administered, will do much to secure that rural development which County Councils quite naturally would be loth to undertake if the expense thereof had to be borne entirely by the rates.

Even as things are, I believe it is possible to make considerable alterations in the type of instruction given, alterations which would cost little to effect and would yield most important results.

I am referring to the place which manual training holds in the curriculum.

Everyone now agrees that there must be more manual training in the elementary schools.

This principle has been advocated for some years, but it is taking a long time to put into practice, and so far the chief development in this direction has undoubtedly been the creation and growth of school gardens, which though excellent in itself does not go far enough. The greater number of children in the elementary schools will have to make their living by the use of their hands, therefore they should be taught to use their hands intelligently during their school life. This does not mean that they should be taught a trade at the elementary school, which would be both impossible and undesirable; it means that in training the child to use his hands intelligently, he will necessarily also be taught to use his brain intelligently.

Seeing then the great and admitted importance of this manual training, is it too much to ask that so many hours a week shall be definitely earmarked for such instruction? To my mind the objective to aim at is that the morning should be devoted to the literary side of education and say three afternoons a week to manual training, but anything approaching a hard and fast rule must be avoided. The point is this, that book work (much of it to do with books of little value) has become so completely the body and soul of our system, that manual instruction will still be kept out, or at all events not allowed

to play its proper part, unless it is definitely decreed that such and such hours be given to manual teaching.

An interesting experiment is now being made in the Lindsey division of Lincolnshire with a group of 24 schools of varying sizes, situated both in town and country, the chief object of which is to show that far more manual instruction than hitherto can profitably be given in schools of all sizes, whether they be under a master or mistress; and that this important alteration in the curriculum can be effected without involving the local authority in any great extra outlay.

In the case of some of the small schools the manual instruction will have to be very simple: cardboard work, the Judd system of woodwork, for instance; still, though simple and elementary, most excellent hand and eye training can be given by their means.

In the case of the large schools, a higher and more varied type of manual instruction can be provided without difficulty, gardening occupying an important part in all schools that can obtain a piece of land.

The whole success of such an experiment must rest with the individual teacher, therefore it is necessary to proceed with great caution. The suitable group of schools being chosen, the teachers should then be invited to confer with

his Majesty's inspector and the County Education officials, and to discuss the details of the curriculum and the necessary variations for the respective schools. I think local authorities should confer with the teachers more often than they do; it is regrettable to look upon our school teachers as servants, simply because the County Council is the channel through which their salaries are paid. Theirs is a national work, and, as the care of the rising generation is entrusted to them, they deserve consideration as a most important class of citizen, and further, their splendid and disinterested service in the past merits every recognition. I am sure that when any important change in the curriculum or methods of instruction is proposed, it could be most quickly and satisfactorily effected by means of informal conferences with the teachers, bringing them into the movement and making them understand the object in view.

Too often education authorities send out cut-and-dried instructions to which many of the schools cannot give effect, or tabulate lists of questions or ask teachers to draw up schemes on certain given lines; and the results are generally disappointing. Could it be otherwise? It is not part of the duty of the teacher to be able to devise a scheme on new lines, though undoubtedly some could do so; but at a conference all intelligent teachers would help to guide a

new scheme into the most practical form.

For instance, to refer again to the experiment I have mentioned, a difficulty arose as to what to do with the small children while the teacher was giving manual instruction to the older ones; one of the local schoolmasters suggested that they should be allowed to stay in the room and watch the elder children, as this would rouse their interest in the work. This certainly commends itself to me as a better plan than the other course of appointing a temporary monitress.*

I cannot leave this subject without saying a word as to the sympathetic attitude of the Board of Education, which, far from blocking the experiment, were most encouraging; in fact they have complained (vide Mr. Runciman's address to the Deputation on Rural Education, Nov. 4. 1909) that local authorities so rarely come forward with suggested experiments.

I still come sometimes across the statement that a radical change of attitude is necessary at the Board of Education; it seems to me that people who say this do not realize how greatly the Board has changed in the last 4 or 5 years. I can only testify that in my personal dealings with the Board I have found a commendable absence of red tape and a keen interest in any suggested experiment for increasing the amount of practical manual instruction. Probably there

* This is the case of a very small school.

exists still a certain number of inspectors who may damp rather than encourage local initiative, but such men certainly are not missionaries of the true spirit that prevails at the Board.

It is naturally most important that harmony should exist between the central and the local authority, otherwise it will be hard to achieve the 'strength that lies in concentration of effort and co-ordination of aim" that Mr. Bray so ably contends for in his excellent work, "The Town Child."

A most important point is how to induce local education authorities to concentrate their effort and co-ordinate their aim. The local authorities do not keep sufficiently in touch with each other; a certain amount of esprit de corps is right, but in a question of such national importance as the development of our system of education, there ought to be more co-operation than at present there is amongst education authorities. Every experiment to make our education more practical should be carefully watched by all local committees and either adopted or adapted as soon as it has proved successful.

The County Councils Association is supposed to be the chief means of keeping County Councils in touch with each other, and it attains this object, but not sufficiently, particularly in the department of education. It is hard to see how to remedy this defect; possibly

by inducing the respective Councils to send to the meetings of the County Council Association in London, as well as their chairman and secretary an acknowledged educationalist who would endeavour to keep his own council in line with the general movement. It might be possible in fact to have two meetings a year definitely given up to the consideration of how best to deal with formulative schemes. The discussions should be more or less informal and members should be encouraged to describe any experiments that had come under their notice and to outline possible developments.

At present the meetings of the education committees, both of the County Council Association and the respective Councils, are so overweighted with the ordinary routine business that there is little time to consider properly the formulation of new schemes, and in consequence many alterations and reforms are delayed that would otherwise be accepted unanimously.

As the committees of the County Council Association evince much diffidence in issuing direct recommendations to the County Councils, for fear of wounding their susceptibilities, perhaps the best method will be to endeavour to make the Rural Education Conferences, which are now to be held half-yearly, fulfil this function, and thus secure increased uniformity of action. Also the nature study exhibition held at the

Royal Agricultural Society's shows should prove more and more a valuable "co-ordinating agency," in respect to rural subjects.

Though the two conferences on rural education held during the summer of 1909 were most interesting and may have attracted some attention, I cannot say that they show any definite signs of having helped to increase "the concentration of effort and co-ordination of aim" in the work of the County Councils throughout England.

It is to be hoped that, as education authorities recognise that it is one of their most important functions to formulate schemes and make experiments and alterations in our system of education, they will feel the practical need of these conferences as affording a means of comparing notes and exchanging ideas.

Before leaving the subject of general education I must refer again to Mr. Bray's "Town Child." Every one interested in education should read it and give heed especially to his chapters on "The Child and the School," and "The Child and the World."

He deals most admirably with what should be the aim of school life; and to the fundamental question, "What is Education?" Mr. Bray makes the "Man in the Street" give the answer, "The object of education is the formation of character."

I think the average man in the street would say, "I dunno," but the superior M. I. T. S. would probably make answer as Mr. Bray suggests!

And yet in either case one wishes that the teaching of Herbert Spencer upon education had permeated the average mind more deeply; in my opinion his answer to that question is the true summing up of the aims of education, namely, to train the child to think for himself and think correctly, or, to give a more up-to-date variation to this definition—to make a child do something and do it well.

Any system of education, worthy of the name, must form character: it is an inseparable and a necessary result.

Again quoting from Mr. Bray—"A child must acquire regularity of habit during the years he passes at school, for force of habit is the greatest palliative to the drudgery that is the lot of men," but a right habit of thought is the best habit of all, for it is the parent of all other minor habits. The power of thinking for one's self is at the basis of all interest in life, alike for the child as for the grown-up; it is also the greatest incentive to imagination; and finally, the power of thinking correctly is the most valuable tool of life with which the child can be equipped.

The development of our education during the

past 30 years has not been directed to fostering this individual thought among the scholars; in fact one has sorrowfully to admit that its effect has been decidedly the opposite; I have myself heard a teacher rebuke a child for a really intelligent answer, because, forsooth, it was not quite in accordance with the textbook!

We are improving, but we have still great leeway to make up, and it would be well if the inspectors could show that they value the evidence of individual thought more than a display of cut and dried knowledge. "Inspectors must direct attention to the interest displayed by the scholars in their work, and must think less of the amount of knowledge exhibited." ("Town Child.")

And again in reference to a definite subject of the curriculum, drawing—"Art teaching for the few who have talent in this direction is useful, but for the many it is worse than useless." I feel most strongly on this subject, and my technical training as an architect qualifies me to assert that, taken as a whole, the time spent on drawing is unprofitably spent; freehand drawing on smooth paper with a hard pencil is not freehand, though if coarse brown paper and charcoal were used it might serve as a means of testing which children had the power of expressing themselves on paper. A sufficient knowledge of scale drawing to enable a child to

understand a plan and also to make a simple one would certainly be useful; but with all the time now spent on drawing it is obvious that this instruction is not effectually given, for, taken as a whole, English workmen, even intelligent ones, are slower at understanding a plan than workmen of other nationalities. In a furniture factory which I went over a few years ago, I found one or two French or Italian workmen employed to translate the drawings to the English workmen, who seemed unable to understand the relief of a panel of carving, for instance, from the light and shade shown in the drawings, though when once started their work was equal, if not superior, to that of the foreigners.

It is only now, after having written many pages upon the general aspects of the problem, that I feel I can approach that special phase of it which concerns or should concern itself with the training of those who are going to work upon the land—in other words, with Rural Education.

One or two preliminary statements must be made, for though probably they are no longer necessary, it is well to be on the safe side.

It is still sometimes said of those who are endeavouring to reform rural elementary education, that their aim is to produce cheap labour for the farmer. It is also said, as a sort of

corollary, that it is likewise their aim to keep the education in the country of a lower standard than in the town.

I fear that at one time many of the teachers themselves had misgivings on these two points; whether or not there was originally any ground for such misgivings I am unable to say, but I think that there are few teachers to-day who still harbour such apprehensions. Certainly these accusations can only be brought forward by persons who have studied most superficially the movement that is at present going on.

Since I have been concerned with rural education, I have come across no one actively engaged in assisting the work who was not anxious to see a higher (and therefore better paid) type of labourer produced by our country schools, and who did not demand that the standard of instruction given in the rural school should be as high as that given in towns. And even such purely agricultural organisations as the Central Chamber of Agriculture and the Farmers' Union have been emphatic in their demand for a sounder and more practical type of education in the rural schools.

There are, as in every other class, reactionary farmers who are against education of any type, but these are few and far between. Most farmers clearly realise that the type of labourer now being produced by our rural school is not

satisfactory, and that the present day labourer is not nearly so good a man as was his father. They would welcome any alteration in our system of education, if once they were convinced that it meant giving them youths who could use their brains as well as their hands.

On the other hand, the farmers who declare that reformers are trying to teach agriculture in school, and that it cannot be done, have much more ground for their assertion. I fear that even amongst so-called experts it is not always clearly understood that agriculture cannot be taught in school. No trade or industry can be taught at any elementary school. But such instruction can be given that the boy will be prepared to take up and become proficient in any industry.

And that is the object which those who now demand radical alterations in the type and method of instruction given in elementary schools have in view.

Practical manual instruction must be given in all schools; that will be the best preparation for specialization at a later date. But that manual instruction should take its bias from local conditions—agricultural, if agriculture be the mainstay of the surrounding population, just as its character would be affected by mining or cotton spinning, or any other industry closely related to the lives of the neighbouring people.

The steady growth of school gardens and of nature study is most satisfactory, in that gardening, properly taught, provides an excellent method of manual instruction, serviceable for every scholar, whatever his future avocation. It is particularly suitable for the rural school, because it interests the children in handling the soil—the soil which provides a livelihood for the bulk of the surrounding population.

The school garden is not meant to turn out expert gardeners. In some cases it may incidentally do so, but the school garden properly used is the best blackboard ever invented, the only fully satisfactory way of co-relating nature study with the general work of the school, for it affords the most intimate examples of plant life, ready at all times to be used by the skilful master; it can play an important part in practical arithmetic, doing away with the old-fashioned hypothetical problems and substituting problems that occur in everyday life; it offers interesting subject matter for the school reader and for lessons in composition. And what more excellent exercise could there be than for a scholar to keep, unaided, a record of the history of his garden plot?

Finally, as much science as the elementary scholar requires can be taught in the garden, just a few practical principles to explain the causes of certain effects.

For years science has been more neglected in English schools than perhaps in those of any other country; now the tide is turning more and more in favour of its teaching, and on the whole rightly so. But with us there is always the danger of too great a swing of the pendulum, and if the teaching of bookish, dry, and spurious science is introduced into elementary schools the effects will be disastrous.

A master with a smattering of science is generally very much pleased with himself and wants to bring in as much "science" as possible. Unfortunately, a smattering of science is often only of the abstract sort, and if schoolmasters with this smattering try to introduce a modicum of abstract science, it certainly will neither interest nor profit the children.

Before leaving the subject of school gardens, I must lay further stress on their value in training the powers of observation, and in making the children think for themselves. School gardens have only within the last four or five years been brought into prominence, and yet cases are not wanting of manufacturers and merchants deliberately choosing to employ boys who had been to a school provided with a garden, because they considered that the powers of observation and general intelligence of such boys were greater than in others who had not enjoyed this advantage.

I have referred to school gardening and nature study, but I do not mean to suggest that nature study cannot profitably appear in the school curriculum unless there is a garden; it is only necessary to see the splendid way in which instruction in nature study is given in some of the London schools, to realize how successful it can prove even without a garden—but the converse is not true; the garden without nature study does not justify its existence.

The exhibition of nature study, now held annually in connection with the show of the Royal Agricultural Society, is intensely interesting, alike to those actively engaged in the subject, and to the casual observer. The story of the habits and construction of plants and flowers is often astonishingly well told, and the child's unaided delineation from nature is sometimes truly delightful; but what horrors result in those cases where, under the influence of an "artistic" master, the child has been constrained to contort the simple outline of some flower into the design for a tile! It is not the business of a school teacher or his pupils to design tiles.

Nor does it come within the scope of nature study to concern itself with a little case of neatly packed samples of artificial fertilizers, and to specify in a crude and inaccurate way the uses to which they should be put. But

time will certainly cure such mistaken applications as these.

Still, it must be kept clearly in mind that the development of school gardens and of nature study is not sufficient to create the full rural spirit that should exist in every country school, or to bring children into sympathetic touch with the conditions surrounding them; the bias must be given in all grades of instruction, and, as I have already said, the school garden and nature teaching are most valuable means to that end, but if school gardens are not rightly handled and nature teaching is not properly given, they are far better left alone. It is remarkable what a number of teachers have already qualified to give this instruction, but no teacher who is not properly qualified should be allowed to attempt it.

For this rightly rural spirit in the school is the beginning of all things. It will in no way hinder the progress of those who intend to follow other avocations than tilling the soil, and it will so stimulate those who mean to remain in the country, that they will be interested in land itself, and will be ready to avail themselves of every opportunity (such as evening schools, continuation classes, &c.,) of acquiring advanced instruction with a direct bearing upon agriculture.

But, above all, let us be logical and recognise

that there is no use in providing continuation classes, farm schools, agricultural colleges, etc., if this necessary interest be not first aroused in the elementary schools.

The objective must be a complete sequence in agricultural education, leading from the elementary school to the agricultural college; a ladder with its full complement of rungs must be provided, but this ladder will be used wholly only by the exceptionally bright scholars. We should aim at having as many exceptionally bright pupils as possible, for it is unsatisfactory to make a ladder and then to have few to climb.

At the present time, according to the Report of the Departmental Committee (CD4207), we have a sufficient number of agricultural colleges; and yet these are not playing the part that they should in agricultural education, and are not attracting farmers' sons in large numbers, undoubtedly because of the want of the right school atmosphere in the first place, and the lack of a complete chain of instruction leading up to the college.

In the whole of England not more than two hundred or three hundred farmers' sons avail themselves of college instruction in any one year!

Youths intending to emigrate, to become experts, county council lecturers, or land agents, form the bulk of the scholars who attend these colleges; their demand should be satisfied at the

universities and other special institutions, but the agricultural college proper should be for the sons of the practical farmer. Farmers hesitate to send their sons to associate with other youths who have been brought up more extravagantly.

That rural atmosphere in the elementary school which I contend is so necessary, exists in a remarkable degree in Denmark and Belgium, and in fact on the continent generally.

The interest in land aroused in the pupils by the right school atmosphere must not be allowed to drop when the elementary school course is done—on the contrary it must be fostered and developed by every means of continuation instruction, until the youth will find himself at the age of eighteen equipped with such practical knowledge that he will be able to lead the most useful life possible. The majority of people in this country are giving expression to far less than their real potential usefulness simply because they have not been rightly taught.

Following the elementary school of the right sort we want a system of continuation instruction which, I am inclined to think, should be compulsory,—though it must be remembered that owing to the sparse population of rural England (Denmark has twice and Belgium three times the rural population per square mile), there are many isolated families whose children could not

attend continuation classes.

This continuation instruction would be given by a gradually developing system of practical farm schools, winter schools and evening classes.

There are some authorities who hold that practical farm schools are not suitable to English conditions ; and while I quite agree that it would not be advisable to develop them to the extent that they have been developed in France, still I maintain that there is scope for a considerable number of farm schools. We are giving a rural bias to many of our country grammar schools, and this is all in the right direction, but there should be the practical farm school as well. This would serve as the grammar school for the farmers' sons and would be so attractive to the practical agriculturist that he would gladly send his son for an extra two years of instruction, though he might not feel inclined to send him to the agricultural college.

The farm school should never come as a wedge between the elementary school and the college but should attract pupils who would have no prospect of going to an agricultural college, and it should also prove a most valuable recruiting centre for the college itself. A well managed farm of from 100 to 300 acres should be attached to this school.

On the whole it is probable that the winter

continuation school would be found most suited to English conditions—it would be an all day school open for the 4 or 5 winter months, the pupils doing ordinary labourers' work for the remaining months. These schools ought also to have a farm attached, and in certain districts the farm should be run as an experimental small holding.

Evening classes, where practical, form a valuable means of continuation instruction, but often they are only classes a little lower in type than the higher standards of the elementary school, and, as such, far from being of practical use they are only a means of wasting public money.

For the wise development of this secondary agricultural education it is absolutely necessary for every county to have its own Agricultural Organising Instructor. Quite a number of counties already have such an officer, and in Belgium, a country where agricultural instruction is greatly developed, this organiser is looked upon as the most important unit of the system. It is impossible for the ordinary official staff of a local education authority properly to supervise secondary agricultural education without such a man.

The recently passed Development Act ought to prove a great incentive to County Councils to formulate schemes for improving secondary

education beneficial to agriculture, and doubtless many farm schools and winter schools will be started; but while such development is very desirable it is ever necessary to insist upon the fact that the net results are bound to be disappointing and unsatisfactory so long as the creating of the rural atmosphere in the country elementary school is neglected.

Our teachers undoubtedly look upon life in the country with far greater favour than in former years when their influence was all directed towards inducing the brighter boys to go into the towns; and they are beginning to recognise, at all events in those counties where better wages prevail, that a youth with 16 or 18 shillings a week is really better off in the country, from hygienic, moral and physical points of view, than he would be in the town, with, say, 22 shillings per week. Should he be earning even 30 shillings per week in the town, and thus securing a financial advantage, the country life would still maintain its superiority from the other points of view.

Still, though the attitude of the general body of teachers is good, there are many who say, and rightly, that the rural labourers' children have little chance of bettering themselves in the country; and these are just the keenly intelligent men who would be the best advocates of the principle of "Back to the land," or rather,

"Stay on the land," if they were convinced that serious efforts were being made to increase the future opportunities for their scholars. It rests largely with the landowners and farmers to see that these opportunities are increased; the landowners should provide more cottages, and both they and the farmers should give preferment to those youths who have done well at school and have shown keenness in subjects bearing upon a life on the land.

We are a wonderful people for systematically reversing the right procedure whenever we deal with a problem; we have made new codes, altered school conditions in every way, but we have left the foundation—the training of the teacher—to the last.

I see that I have myself written many pages about education, and yet have not touched upon the basis of education—the teacher. If once we get the right type of teacher and give him a free hand, a sound system of education will almost evolve of itself; at all events, it is certainly impossible to evolve a satisfactory system if the training of the teacher is not right.

Just as the present training of the elementary school child is not sufficiently practical, so is the training of the teacher too academic. Our training colleges often seem to exist chiefly with a view to prepare candidates for the Oxford

and Cambridge examinations, instead of to turn out teachers versed in the art of teaching. The instruction given at the training colleges has undoubtedly improved greatly within the last ten years; at the time of Mr. Scott Coward's report the education given was very deplorable indeed. It is to be regretted that there is but little up-to-date information available in regard to training colleges—new ones have been built of late years, but the training college accommodation must still be far short of the requirements.

Training colleges should be national—that is the only satisfactory system; and all teachers should be trained in a college and not permitted to enter the profession by means of pupil teacher centres and other back-door methods.

Though the ideal arrangement is for the would-be teacher to spend two years at a training college, and then to go out and do practical school work for the next year or two, and after that to return to the training college—it must not be forgotten that during the first two years he should receive sufficient practical instruction in the art of pedagogy to make him a thoroughly useful teacher when he leaves. Yet I find that many capable headmasters, whose opinions are worthy of attention, consider that a large number of teachers fresh from the training college do not know how to handle their classes and are not so good at pedagogy as those who

have qualified as pupil or supplementary teachers. This is certainly a serious defect. Again, though it is well to encourage country teachers who return to college for their third year to specialize in agricultural subjects, it is also most desirable —nay, necessary—that in the two preliminary years a certain modicum of instruction bearing on country life and land as the source of our supply of food should be given to all teachers, whether destined for town or country.

Far better provision for instruction in special subjects at all training colleges is essential, so that the rural teacher could obtain the special knowledge that a rural teacher has need of; though there is no reason why in certain agricultural colleges the two functions—of training teachers, as well as farmers' sons—should not be developed together, as has been so successfully done at the Macdonald College at St. Anns, near Montreal. But in that case the college has two carefully distinguished departments—the Normal Department for training teachers, the Agricultural College proper for farmers' sons; so that, if the principle is to be maintained, either certain of our present training colleges ought to develop a clearly agricultural side, or certain agricultural colleges create a distinctly Normal Department.

Until we have such a system we must perforce utilize our agricultural colleges (Wye and

Swanley College are recognised by the Board of Education), as far as possible, for giving this instruction in special subjects, and encourage rural teachers to take a third year's course in subjects bearing upon country life. It is regrettable that more teachers and students are not availing themselves of the opportunities so afforded, and I think local authorities should take definite measures to induce teachers and students to make use of this instruction. But the agricultural college as it is at present constituted is not meant to train teachers: it is meant to inculcate practice with science in the minds of those who are actually going to make their living off the land, i.e., farmers' sons.

During the period of transition, and in order to reach as many as possible of the teachers now at work, no means must be left untried in the way of Saturday classes, holiday courses at agricultural colleges, travelling instructors, etc. But it is necessary for local education committees to exercise great care as to whom they nominate to attend these courses; it is a matter of much difficulty for a committee, and it can only be dealt with satisfactorily if the inspector, or secretary, or someone who knows the qualifications of the individual applicants, is allowed to guide the committee. When an adequate normal system has been evolved, the next step should certainly be to develop a plan of steady

promotion, and in this way small village schools would be able to secure a succession of good teachers. Surrey, I believe, has already in working order a scheme of registering and promoting the teachers in the council schools, but this as yet cannot be extended to the church schools.

I have touched in a most cursory manner upon the question of the training of the teachers, but space precludes its fuller development.

In considering education as it affects the agricultural industry, it is most important to remember that, in the past, agriculture, more than any other industry, has suffered from the want of directly beneficial instruction. Technical instruction beneficial to mining, engineering, in short to mechanical industries of all kinds, has been developed at great expense, but in very few counties has a reasonable and fair proportion of the Whiskey money been allocated for practical instruction beneficial to agriculture—such as farm labour classes, bee-keeping, farriery, farm hygiene, hedging, thatching, draining classes, etc., providing instruction in those subjects in which the rising generation of labourer is so deficient.

It is strange that in entirely rural counties the farmers did not insist from the outset upon a fairer share of that ear-marked money being spent on instruction which the practical farmers

themselves said was excellent and beneficial.

In some counties even less is spent to-day on this class of instruction than was allocated to it 6 or 7 years ago. The money was filched to create pupil-teachers' centres—of all undesirable uses to put it to!

In my own county—an entirely rural one—the amount spent on practical instruction beneficial to agriculture had decreased by one half until quite recently, when a decided step in advance, by reviving some of the farm labour classes, was taken, and it is to be hoped that a course of systematic development has been entered upon.

If this advance is to be maintained and made as effective as the needs of agriculture demand, far more financial assistance must be forthcoming from the Treasury. The movement has in the past suffered from the overlapping and friction which existed between the Board of Education and the Board of Agriculture. Though this condition of things was strenuously denied by the officials of the two Boards, it was sufficiently evident to local authorities who had the practical arrangements to make. However that may be, a new inter-departmental committee (the necessity for which the Central Chamber of Agriculture and other societies urged so strongly) has been created recently, and the results must work to the benefit of the cause, so that from

this time forward local authorities should find less difficulty in connection with grants, and in regard to the exact limits of the spheres of the two departments.

In general terms, all higher technical education is now clearly under the Board of Agriculture, which has a paltry £25,000 a year at its disposal with which to give grants to our colleges, etc.—a sum which in the United States would be considered an insufficient grant for a single college.

Special instruction with a rural bias, if given in the elementary schools, comes under the Board of Education, and can earn a grant from it, as also certain practical classes in hedging, ditching, draining, etc., which it is difficult to rank as clearly elementary, can earn a grant from the Board of Education. This Board has far larger funds at its disposal than its sister Board; as a keen agriculturist wishing to see practical agricultural instruction developed to the full, I care little from which Board the aid comes, so long as the money is spent to the practical benefit of agriculture.

From the official figures at present available it is difficult to arrive at the total amount of money spent on agricultural instruction, but including grants from the two Boards and the allocation from the Whiskey money it does not appear to be more than £110,000, a wretchedly

small sum considering the interests at stake; and far less in proportion than the amount so expended in other countries.

In writing about education, almost unconsciously one deals with boys rather than girls. Also, in making changes and reforms, boys certainly receive more consideration than girls; and yet, if the type and method of instruction given in our elementary schools during the past thirty years has been bad for boys, it has been worse still for girls. For girls—though the future mothers of the coming generation—are taught nothing at school to prepare and fit them for their first duty in life—motherhood; they are not even taught to be passable housewives. Now there is not the slightest doubt that girls during their years at the elementary school could be taught some of those practical guiding principles that would make them capable housewives and efficient mothers.

The three or four "home-making" centres which have recently been started show what can be done in this direction. The girls in the two highest standards are transferred, in classes of 14, for a given number of hours' work per week to the "home-making centre," which has its habitat in a separate building near the school, where a kitchen, bedroom, sitting-room, all of the cottage type, are provided, and the girls work there under as nearly home conditions as possible.

These home-making centres should be developed throughout the country with as little loss of time as possible. The ideal is certainly to have the home-making centre in a separate building, but much of the practical work done there could be carried out in an ordinary classroom.

Extreme Socialists maintain that in the present development of civilization the family system has failed, that, as a whole, parents are not capable of looking after their children properly, and that therefore the State must step in and more and more assume the rôle of "over parent." They advance as evidence of their contention the statement that 14 out of every 50 babies are stillborn, and that only about 13 of the 50 are brought up in ways in the least fitting for the future citizens of the country.

A disastrous wave of socialism is bound to come, unless it can be shown that it is possible to reform the evils that have crept into the "family system" with the development of the present civilization. And there is only one way of reforming the "family system"—by teaching the girls the duties and responsibilities of motherhood and training them to be efficient housewives.

A large class of children is now brought up in a greater or lesser degree by the State. I refer to destitute children—some 235,000 in

number. The present system of dealing with them is far from satisfactory. They are brought up with the stigma of pauperism, since they are under the control of the poor law authorities; they are brought up in the way most calculated to make them of as little use to themselves and the State as possible—to perpetuate the race of paupers. It is altogether unwise to educate children in institutions: some institutions must exist, but they should be reduced to the minimum, and should always be situated in the country, and even in the colonies.

It was my great privilege to know that most splendid of all our painters, G. F. Watts, and I used often to listen with the greatest interest to his opinions on the social conditions of the country: his insight and judgment were most convincing. He arrived at his conclusions from his own observations, even in subjects with which he had practically nothing to do. I remember hearing him outline the ideal method of instruction for children, and I thought he had just read Dewey's "School and State" but on enquiry I found that he had never heard of it. He was ever wont to urge the advantage that would accrue if reformatories and institutions for teaching destitute children were placed in the colonies, and had large areas of land attached; it certainly would mean that the children were placed in the best surroundings for themselves,

and the public purse would be saved the unnecessary expense of buying costly sites within city limits, as has been the general practice in the past.

From the point of view of economy, the right way to educate pauper children is, as far as possible, in the ordinary elementary school under the supervision of the local education committee, and the best way of housing them is to board them out with respectable families. In England some 6,000 of the total 235,000 are so dealt with and the evidence is all in favour of it. As a contrast in Austria, there are some 30,000 children boarded out. And it is noteworthy that existing legislation in Austria relating to children was brought in by a Conservative Government, and not by Socialists or Radicals. The Government was guided by two main principles—first, that children are the country's chief asset: second, that every child has a right to develop into the best possible type of citizen, with the corollary that therefore the State has the power to step in and remove the child from conditions unfavourable to its development. Surely reasonable people cannot take exception to the soundness of these axioms? The results in Austria are most satisfactory; there the authorities seem able to make parents contribute more than is the case here, so that the net annual

cost to the public is only £6 15s. per destitute child.

With us the authorities have, it is to be feared, no such clearly formulated principles for guidance; the State interferes where destitution is glaringly patent—interferes with results that are often deplorable, and at an annual cost of up to £20 per child in the country, and up to £54 per child in the towns.

It is because the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission so clearly recognises these three guiding principles, that to my mind it merits support.*

I do not see how a satisfactory condition can be created unless the present poor law system is done away with *in toto*. And, as a practical worker on the County Council, I should be glad to see the whole question of the allocation of local work carefully considered. The County Council should be the supreme financial authority for all things local; if the burdensome care of the mentally infirm were transferred from County to Imperial Authorities, there is no doubt that the Councils could cope with the poor law work. Practically all the necessary committees now exist, and the local education committees could deal with the destitute children of their districts. In the country—and my remarks are confined to rural districts—this is not a very

* And above all that it is based on the principle that prevention is better than cure.

serious matter, as the numbers would not be great.

One remark more as to destitute children and the land. The land of the United Kingdom and the colonies is crying out for population; and if there be one class of children that the State has pre-eminently the right to guide as to the choice of their work and place—where they can best serve the empire—surely it is the children of the destitute brought up entirely at the expense of the State? Particularly is it disastrous to let these children drift back into the cities after their schooling is done, and I am sure that a system of practical farm schools which would carry the technical education of this class on to the age of eighteen would be of great value.

I bring this chapter to a close by printing certain extracts from Monsieur Vuyst's book, "L'enseignement agricole et ses méthodes," in which he so ably describes the atmosphere, instruction and methods that should exist in all rural schools; and I further append the circular of the County Council Association for the sake of showing the line of development which that body advocates for the rural school.

RURAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Conference Committee have had their attention drawn to a publication by M. de Vuyst, Chief Inspector of Agriculture to the Kingdom

of Belgium, entitled "L'enseignement agricole et ses méthodes," which contains a great deal of information as to the methods of agricultural instruction in different countries, and much other suggestive matter. The following extracts may, it is thought, prove serviceable to the Conference :—

"To secure a full and complete education for the boys and girls who elect to live upon the land, it is necessary that they should receive a general instruction which will secure the necessary development of all their faculties as well as specific instruction in agricultural subjects."

"While the elementary school should remain true to its first duty of giving general instruction, it must develop as far as possible the practical side. If this be not done the resulting education will be theoretic and abstract and not only discouraging to pupils but practically useless to them in after life."

"It must not for one moment be thought that because we advocate this development of the practical side we wish to see rural elementary schools turned into agricultural schools. This would be essentially wrong, for the same reasons that it would be wrong to transform them into industrial schools. We maintain that our rural schools should have an agricultural atmosphere, not an exaggerated but a carefully thought out and planned agricultural bias, at the same time

shewing the pupils an attractive perspective of further and more scientific studies which they can take advantage of."

"Those whose mission in life is to give agricultural instruction should not be content with merely insisting upon the economic and social importance of the industry, but should clearly demonstrate the superiority of the agricultural calling from the cultivator's point of view —healthy surroundings, the constant variety that the intelligent cultivator can enjoy and the pleasure of being in touch with Nature call for the continual exercise of the intellectual faculties."

"Everyone should have the spirit of observation and initiative strongly developed, but above all the properly trained agriculturalist ought to have these invaluable qualities developed to the highest degree; he lives with ever changing surroundings and his work varies with the seasons, so a forethought unnecessary in most industries must be his if he is to be successful."

"In the elementary school the object is simply to give the child ideas about agriculture to stir his interest in it, because this information is essential to the success of a pupil's general education, whatever his future vocation may be, for as everyone must have a minimum knowledge of geography, mathematics and history, so should he possess a minimum knowledge of

the rudiments of agriculture. Agriculture surrounds us all, it is the greatest industry of the nation; it supplies our daily food and it is therefore only logical that instruction in its rudiments should form part of the scheme of any code or schedule of education. This principle has been accepted by France, Germany, Spain, and the United States."

"Starting with the principle that the instruction in an elementary school should be influenced by the requirements of local conditions—and this applies to boys and girls alike—it is impossible to have a hard and fast schedule for the whole country. The authority can, however, most usefully issue a memorandum that will serve as a general guide to teachers who will then be able to make out specific schedules from it.

We now give a suggested scheme of studies which divides itself into three groups, or rather concentric circles—

(1) Children from 6 to 8 years old.

Theoretic—Study of wild and cultivated plants, trees, insects, and animals.

Practical—Planting a few common plants in the garden.

(2) Children 9 to 11 years old.

Theoretic—Observation and comparison, weather, soils, plants, trees, animals, insects, their manner of life, uses, etc.

Practical—Garden work, observing different

conditions of weather, soils, crops, etc.

(3) Children 12 to 14 years old.

Theoretic—Observation, comparison, expression of opinions, the same instruction as in Class 2 more developed, suitable books to be used, experiments, visits to model farms.

Practical—The different varieties of corn, fruit and vegetables; grafting, budding, etc.; certain principles in regard to domestic animals.

It is of the greatest importance that the above three classes of instruction should be so co-ordinated as to make a continuous and complete scheme."

THE TRAINING OF THE TEACHER

"The preparation of the teacher is of vital importance—the master makes the school and the school makes the pupil. In normal schools very practical instruction in agriculture should be given. Work in field and garden ought to form a large part of the manual instruction given. If special mention were made in diplomas of the agricultural qualifications of the teachers, it seems to us that it would prove a strong incentive to pupils."

"Most countries now clearly recognise the necessity of including agricultural instruction in the curriculum of the training college."

"Further, in many countries, much care is taken to keep the teachers up-to-date in their

agricultural knowledge :—

(1) Conferences are held to discuss the best subjects to teach and the best *methods* of giving the instruction.

(2) At these Conferences careful records should be kept and published in book form.

(3) Holiday classes for teachers."

THE LESSON IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

" The teacher will fix upon the subject matter of the lesson and then prepare the necessary objects, pictures, scale drawings, etc., for demonstration. The teacher should carefully prepare the lesson himself beforehand, and, as a guide to this preparation, model lessons and books for teachers could well be used, on condition that an intelligent and not a servile use be made of them."

" The clever teacher will generally proceed as follows :—First question the pupils about the preceding lesson if it had a direct bearing on the one about to begin. Then develop the new subject matter. Next a concise resumé, and finally exercises on the subject of the lesson. Great care should be taken not to swamp the essentials in a host of needless detail."

" Wherever practicable, and as often as possible, the teacher will give practical demonstrations as he proceeds with the lesson, and, above all, as much instruction as possible will be given

in the garden itself."

"Children must be made so to enjoy the garden work as scarcely to know that they are being given a lesson, and nature study should never be presented to the children as a dry science. They must be made to understand and love Nature."

"Excursions, when properly and methodically conducted, are most useful in nature study training."

"In rural schools the teacher should not limit himself to dealing with questions of nature study only during the nature study hour: he should aim at co-relating his work, hygiene, domestic economy, gardening, and nature study being all interdependent. No method of teaching nature study is satisfactory which does not teach the child to express clearly in his own language the knowledge he has acquired."

RURAL EDUCATION

Reading.—While most of the reading should, no doubt, consist of history, geography, and general literature, lessons should, so far as possible, be based upon the facts of the immediate neighbourhood; for instance, geography should commence with the physical features of the district, history with the events associated with some local battlefield, ancient church or castle, and the reading should deal

mainly with matters of rural interest.

Writing and Composition.—The subjects of nature study and manual work, which have been occupying the attention of the pupils, should frequently form the subjects for composition. Nature study especially will be very incomplete unless the children are able to express clearly in their own words the information and knowledge they have obtained.

Arithmetic.—Introduce as much out of door measurement of land, crops, stacks, cisterns, etc., as possible, and also ascertain by weighing and measuring, the weight of wheat, barley and oats per bushel, etc.

In the class room the problems should bear on rural life and work, such as:—Household accounts, the value of local produce in local markets, a profit and loss account on the school garden, interest on savings bank deposits, value corresponding to cost of cartage per mile, cost of cultivation, number of hurdles to a sheepfold, number of cabbage plants required per acre, area of surface exposed by round and rectangular hay stacks, cubic yards of earth removed in land draining, gallons of water in a cistern of known dimensions, gallons of water per acre from x inches of rain, trusses of hay in a hay stack, amount of timber in a tree, etc.

Nature Study.—The work of the children should consist of, for example:—Making collec-

tions of plants to illustrate some particular feature, *e.g.*, the way in which they propagate themselves by seeds, runners, etc., or the way in which they climb. Collecting and naming the grasses found locally, and classifying them into useful, useless, and injurious common field weeds, and mounting them and describing them with a view to studying why they are so prevalent, and what would be the best means for eradicating them. Observing the germination of seeds in school or out of doors, and studying the conditions favourable to plant growth. Collecting leaves, fruit, bark, wood, etc., of common forest trees, with a view to recognition. Studying injury to plant or animal life by insects, and studying the life history of these insects. Keeping a nature calendar. Making a collection of farm and garden seeds; determining the percentage of germination and purity of samples. Studying the habits of birds, and especially poultry, and keeping records. Making a scrap book of different breeds of farm stock, studying the local physical geography, with especial reference to the soils, their depth and character, and the crops and wild plants that grow upon each.

Drawing should be of two kinds :—

1. *Nature Drawing.*—The careful drawing of the flower, leaf, root, etc., of a plant, the opening of a bud, etc., and afterwards colouring it, is

essential to nature study.

2. *Geometrical and Scale Drawing* is essential to practical arithmetic and to handicraft. The boys should be able to make a scale drawing of a field, garden plot, building, box, implement, etc., and, in gardening and carpentry, work from such drawings. (Freehand done with pencil should be generally omitted, and modelling in clay and a certain amount of charcoal drawing substituted).

Manual Work:—

1. *Gardening*.—The cultivation of a plot with the ordinary vegetables. Either a common garden for the whole class, or a plot of about one square rod in size for each boy, or a combination of these systems may be adopted. Two objects must be kept in view (*a*) to study the growth of crops in relation to the soil (which will be as useful afterwards in farming as in gardening), and (*b*) to obtain skill in the operation of gardening. School gardens worked on somewhat similar lines to those now existing in several counties might be resorted to. Flower culture, bee-keeping, and especially fruit culture should be associated with gardening.

2. *Handicraft* should consist either of (*a*) *Woodwork* designed to make useful things, such as hen-coops, garden frames, bar frames for bee-hives, egg-boxes, etc. The boys should also

learn to mend a gate by a model. The proper use of the various tools and their construction should also be taught. (*b*) *Other Handicrafts*, such as making baskets, net for covering fruit-trees, mats for covering frames, and (for younger children) cardboard work.

3. *Domestic Subjects.* (*a*) *Needlework*, which should always be designed to make and repair useful things; (*b*) *Cooking*, which should include not only cooking the food, but also buying it, laying the table, and washing up. In some districts baking bread should be included; (*c*) *Household Management;* (*d*) *Elementary Hygiene.*

SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF RURAL EDUCATION

(*a*) The importance should be recognised of the study of nature and rural economy for all children.

(*b*) Elementary and continuation school gardens should be provided wherever practicable.

(*c*) Further facilities should be obtained for enabling teachers to be trained in rural subjects.

(*d*) Teachers might be stimulated by the offer of prizes to become thoroughly acquainted with their environment by asking them to write descriptive accounts of their respective parishes.

(*e*) Arrangements might be made for the formation of Boys' Agricultural Clubs, Boys'

Gardening Clubs, and Junior Naturalist Societies, which would give boys practically the same education as continuation schools and classes under other and more attractive names.

NOTE.—Boys' Agricultural Clubs were first started in Illinois about six years ago, and have now been formed in several States of the American Union. Their aim is the definite improvement of agriculture by enlisting the interest and co-operation of the young farmer and farm lad. Seeds, for instance, are distributed amongst the members of the club to begin with, and prizes are offered for the best results. The idea of a school, as such, is altogether absent, but the members are gradually brought into direct touch with educational activity, and these receive such instruction as would be provided by a well-organized intermediate agricultural school. The distinguishing feature of the movement is that it is a voluntary association of young men concerned in the cultivation of the soil: they are encouraged to help themselves, and the demand for opportunities to learn emanates from the members, as they realize more and more that success in farming depends upon knowledge as much as upon manual skill. An account of the Clubs may be read in "School" (John Murray) for January, 1906, and in the Year-Book of the United States Department of Agriculture for

1904 at page 489.

(*f*) Much might be done to improve the school museum by making it an actual collection of the natural history of the district.

(*g*) Local authorities might organize exhibitions of their own shortly before each of the large agricultural shows for the purpose of selecting the most appropriate material for exhibition. This might be done in connection with local agricultural shows.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE LAND

THE title of this chapter may not be quite satisfactory but I use it as being the largest and most comprehensive term that I can employ.

I shall have in it to touch upon the questions of Free Trade and Protection—I wish I could have avoided so controversial a subject; but writing as a keen agriculturist, as one who believes that the land must receive its due, that vastly more wheat must be grown than now, and that it is essential that the price should never be allowed to fall below 30s. a quarter, it is impossible for me to omit the consideration of this subject which is so closely connected with the welfare of the industry. I approach it from a non-party standpoint, simply giving my views on the fiscal problem as an agriculturist.

There is a striking difference between the continental systems of political economy and the English; the French system may fairly be regarded as typical of the continental schools. In the continental schools land is taken as the

basis, while in England it is not; here it is neglected, and the development of factories forms the basis of the English school.

Though our greatest authorities in political economy were fully aware of the all importance of land, the school of political economy as it exists in England to-day has worked for the development of our factories and urban industries at the cost of our agriculture. In spite of all neglect agriculture still remains the greatest industry in the country, with its gross sales amounting to £200,000,000 per annum. It is even from a monetary point of view twice as important as the shipping trade, which gives an annual return of £100,000,000. What our agriculture would be worth to-day if it had not been neglected and penalized is a matter deserving careful consideration.

France provides us with a most helpful example of the results of a political economy strikingly in contrast to our own. The French deliberately fostered and developed their agriculture throughout the nineteenth century; they may have done this even at the cost of their urban industries: it will therefore be instructive to compare briefly the growth of national wealth in the two countries during that period.

One cause of the great growth of wealth in France is that the French are essentially a thrifty people. Granted; but a population living

on the land and having a direct financial interest in the land is always more saving than an urban one—where the surroundings are conducive to extravagance.

The following figures I take from the paper which Mr. Harris read to the Royal Statistical Society some years ago. "During the first 20 years of the 19th century France admitted wheat free of duty. After that date she began taxing imported corn and definitely fostering her agriculture perhaps somewhat at the cost of other industries, just as we by the repeal of the corn laws and the introduction of Free Trade definitely fostered our urban industries at the cost of agriculture.

"It is interesting to follow the results of the two policies in two nations so closely connected. In 1841 Great Britain was vastly richer than France, both as regards total wealth and individual wealth, the latter being £208 per head for Great Britain, and £93 for France.

"By 1865 France had caught us up, and by 1869 was far ahead, having added at the rate of £240,000,000 per annum to her national wealth during the period of 1865-69.

"In 1870 came the Franco-German war which reduced the annual increase of wealth for the period 1869-73 to barely £40,000,000 per annum. Between 1873-85 the increase per annum was £190,000,000 in spite of the great

destruction to the vines by phylloxera.

"During no period of the nineteenth century did the English national wealth show so great an annual increase as the French between 1865-69."

In considering the question of fiscal policy it is important to remember that it is only a branch of the reigning school of political economy, and this problem should be treated as a whole, because then the fiscal question will be kept in its proper relation to the rest of the problem. If the fiscal question be divorced from the other component factors of the right policy towards land, there are two great dangers to apprehend; first that land will be again neglected, even in fiscal reform; second, that from not giving due heed to the other necessary factors (education, transport, organisation of the industry) the agriculturists may look to a tariff to work a miracle for agriculture, and lose sight of the fact that they must actively organise their own industry, and only regard the tariff as one of the chief means to that end.

Unfortunately, in practical politics there is little doubt that the question of Free Trade versus Tariff will receive all attention, and the larger question of Political Economy and land, embracing as it does the important consideration of the attitude of the nation towards the producer and consumer, will be neglected.

In the days of the Roman Empire the pro-

ducer was neglected, and the consumer so unduly pampered that at last he was fed at the State's expense; and how disastrous to the empire! The idea that low prices of agricultural produce contribute largely towards national prosperity is clearly negatived by the following figures.

Between the years 1865-70 the increase in national wealth was £39,000,000. Wheat was under 40s. Between 1870-75 the increase was £126,000,000, yet during that period wheat was at 54s. 7d.—as high as it had been for the 10 years preceding the repeal of the Corn Laws.

In modern times nearly all countries have pursued the policy of wisely fostering the producer, as the most important element in the social comity. And the producer of food has been regarded as the most important of all producers, and in consequence has been safeguarded against unfair competition; he has been taught how to be a good producer; he has been shown the advantages of co-operation; home products have had the benefit of cheap transport, also in exporting to neutral markets the producer has ever had ready to his hand all the organisation of expert knowledge provided by an intelligent and painstaking Government. Land—considered one of the nation's chief assets—has always been for the wise

government an object of special care and attention.

Agriculture and all the other industries have prospered: Germany, France, Holland, Denmark and to an exceptional degree Belgium, have demonstrated how agriculture and manufactures can be developed side by side. Yet, in spite of these notable demonstrations I have heard cabinet ministers and ex-cabinet ministers declare that it is impossible to be a great agricultural nation as well as a great manufacturing one.

How different is the picture presented by England—the producer left to himself to struggle as best he can against unfair dumping from all quarters of the globe!

The agricultural producer has not been provided with the best possible education; no national attempt has been made to induce him to co-operate by giving the incentive of a system of credit banks; he has had to contend against unduly high railway rates, only reduced in favour of his competitors! If the producer be the keystone of the social fabric, Free Trade England has not done much to wisely foster and encourage him.

Though I am emphasizing the importance of the producer, because it seems to me that he has been unduly neglected in England, it would be disastrous to lose sight of the main

principle that the fair balance must be kept between consumer and producer. If there be no demand there can be no supply, but it is just this balance that has with us been disastrously upset by the over-development of urban interests at the cost of rural. As this policy has attracted too much capital and too many people to certain urban industries, so has it forced these industries in many cases to overproduce. Here I must refer the reader to M. Méline, who deals admirably with the subject.

If land be one of the nation's greatest assets, then Free Trade has reduced the capital value of that asset by £1,500,000,000.*

This huge sum must in fairness be deducted from that increase in our manufactures which Free Traders claim as the result of their policy, but which was chiefly caused by the big head start we enjoyed through our position during many years of manufacturing supremacy.

One of the chief claims advanced for Free Trade by its advocates is that it gives the people cheap food—but does it? We must not forget the middleman, and particularly the enormous development of that class in England

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Several different authorities have worked out this figure. According to Sir Inglis Palgrave the loss is made up as follows:—

Diminution in Owner's Capital	£1,000,000,000
,, ,, Farmer's Capital	100,000,000
,, ,, Farmer's Profits	500,000,000
Total	£1,600,000,000

and the heavy toll it levies on every commodity passing through its hands. It is more accurate to say that it has been left to Free Traders to evolve a policy which in the first place is not free trade or fair trade (an unavoidable platitude), a policy which has neglected the producer, a policy which may have benefited the consumer to some extent in certain directions, but pre-eminently a policy which has favoured the middleman! And the middleman makes his living out of the producer and consumer alike. To digress for one moment, it seems to be impossible to write about Tariff Reform without referring to Cobden! But really the views of that worthy man have little to do with the present issues before the country, conditions having so completely changed. It is necessary therefore to consider things as they now are. I am only making mention of Cobden as an excuse for quoting Mr. G. F. Watts. Shortly after Mr. Chamberlain had launched his great scheme of Tariff Reform, I asked Mr. Watts what he thought about it. He replied that he was too old a man to go into the question of a Tariff as opposed to Free Trade, but that he had a great admiration for Mr. Chamberlain, as a man with pre-eminently that most valuable characteristic so generally lacking in Englishmen—elasticity of mind.

And further, in regard to the introduction of

Free Trade, he said he could never place Cobden or Bright on a very high pedestal, for he remembered that Cobden was a cotton manufacturer and wanted cheap cotton, and that both Cobden and Bright voted against Lord Shaftesbury's factory acts, which have done so much to improve the condition of the urban labourer.

But to return to the subject before us. Before considering whether or not a tariff should be imposed on all foodstuffs that can be produced within the United Kingdom, and if imposed, what the effect would be on the consumers—and in regard to foodstuffs, all non-agriculturists must class as consumers—it is necessary to ascertain what tariff is now paid by every consumer who enters a shop and buys from a retail dealer. In other words, what is the amount of the tariff imposed at the present moment by the middleman, and by our wasteful methods of marketing?

I shall take one by one some of the chief articles of consumption, and as far as possible show the difference between the price the British producer is paid for the articles and the price the consumer has to pay.

	Tariff of Middleman.
(1) English grown meat.	
Mutton. Price paid by butcher for a 64 lb. sheep, £1 17s. 4d.; net amount realised by butcher after paying cost of distribution,	

	Tariff of Middleman.
£2 7s. 8d. Butcher's profit, 10·4.	27 %
Beef. Price paid by butcher for a 50 stone bullock, £20; net amount realised by butcher after paying cost of distribution, £23 7s. 5d.	16½ %
Of course cheap colonial and foreign meat is available for the poorest classes, but as sold in many parts of London it is black, unpalatable stuff that few foreign housewives would buy.	
(2) Milk.	
The farmer receives 6d., 7d., 8d., and 9d. per gallon for his milk, according to district and time of year. The retail dealers charge 1/-, 1/4, 1/6 and sometimes 1/8 per gallon. The distribution of milk is much more effectively carried out in Denmark (from a public health point of view) for a sum only 30 % in excess of the amount paid to the producer.	100-120 %
(3) Bread.	
When wheat is at 30/- and the 4 lb. loaf at 5d., 16,8 is the amount charged for turning one quarter of wheat into the corresponding amount of bread.	54 %
(4) Peas, beans, cauliflowers, carrots, turnips, etc.	100-130 %
(5) Small fruit of all kinds.	100-150 %

On the other hand imported groceries are, on the whole, cheap in England, such imported articles, for instance, as tea, coffee, sugar—all, by the way, articles which we are told are more or less injurious to health but which the people

consume in increasingly large amounts.

If, then, the above figures prove that a tariff exists at the present moment, a tariff of the most unscientific kind, uncontrolled by Government; the next question is how and to what extent this tariff of the middleman can be lowered, and a portion of it, at all events, transferred to the Government. It is a question of immense difficulty, and it does not appear to me that the imposition of a 5% or 10% tariff all round in any way meets the case, especially if the expression "all round" does not include all foodstuff—yet this is the proclaimed policy of Tariff Reformers*; a policy which I believe was originally formulated by the present Lord Tennyson and one or two other colonial governors, and finally accepted by Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain has, by the way, been attacked by Free Traders for not having in the earlier stages of the Tariff Reform campaign a cut-and-dried policy: this to my mind is far from being a reproach—so important a policy ought to be formed by slow degrees.

The unofficial Tariff Reform Commission did good work, but a Royal Commission will be necessary; not to enquire into the question of whether or no Tariff Reform should come, but solely with a view to deciding how it should

* Save of course such foodstuff as cannot be produced within the United Kingdom.

come. I know that many ardent reformers look upon the suggestion of a Royal Commission as a subterfuge of weak reformers and free fooders; but I do not think that this follows, and I do not see how a tariff is to be imposed wisely and scientifically without a Royal Commission.

There are still Tariff Reformers who fear to impose a tax on foodstuffs sufficient to help the producer. If agriculture is the most important industry, not only from the financial point of view, but also from that of the social and physical well-being of the whole people; if also it be admitted that agriculture has suffered more than any other industry from Free Trade; then it is clear that in formulating any fiscal policy the greatest effort should be made to benefit agriculture, and that a tariff on foodstuffs should be the starting point. But it is, I fear, hopeless to expect Tariff Reformers to make that practical and logical concession—for most of them are entirely commercialists, or at all events commercialists before they are agriculturists. By the term commercialist, I mean a man who derives his income from some industry or from commercial securities—in short, the man who is not mainly dependent on the land for his livelihood.

There are, I suppose, two main objects in imposing a tariff:

1. The raising of revenue.

2. The encouragement of the producer.

It would not be hard to say which of these two objects would be given the precedence by the average politician.

The imposition of a tariff of 5% or 10% on foodstuffs will certainly produce revenue; Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain have publicly given their solemn assurance that it will not increase the cost of food to the consumer, but how will that 5% or 10% benefit the producer?

I am not carping—but this deserves serious discussion; and personally I am more interested in the effect of tariff upon the producer than its effect upon the imperial exchequer.

If the impost of 2s. per quarter on imported wheat helps to keep the price above 30s. per quarter it will to that extent help the producer. And the 1s. on Colonial wheat would have been in the same way an encouragement to the English producer. An imperial loaf is a good thing, but an all English loaf is a better: it is, therefore, most regrettable that the Tariff Reform League and Mr. Balfour decided upon giving up the 1s. on Colonial wheat.

Of course, until we can grow wheat with the high proportion of starch which is characteristic of American and Canadian wheat we shall be obliged to import about one-fifth of the amount we consume: that would mean 25,000,000 quarters English grown and 5,000,000 quarters

from Canada, a perfectly workable ideal!

But in general terms it seems to me that a 5% duty, in the case of many articles, will simply mean transferring 5% of the middleman's tariff to the Government, where it will be under more scientific control and will be used to the benefit of the whole nation and not to that of one class only.

But let us suppose that a 15% tariff were imposed instead of a 5%, even then it appears to me that so long as our present system of marketing—of exchanging goods—remains as it is, the agricultural producer would not benefit to any great extent. For though the middleman would most probably forego 5% of his tariff from considerations of general expediency, he certainly would not forego 15% thereof. And by far the simplest way for him to meet the situation would be to raise the price for the consumer. Theoretically any impost of 15% ought to increase the producer's prices by 15%, but in practice the middleman's tariff interposes so large a "nonconductive" zone that the 15% would certainly be greatly reduced before it reached the producer.

All this surely points to the necessity of reorganising our system of markets at the same time that we reorganise our fiscal system.

The whole class of middlemen would undoubtedly rise in wrath to resist such a whole-

sale reorganisation of the system of exchange —with which most of them have every reason to be satisfied.

The question is, how far would politicians dare to interfere with the interests of the middleman, and how far would they be able to do so?

From the standpoint of political economy, the middleman, the distributer, is not as useful a citizen as the producer. Distributers there must always be, but, as has been pointed out, Free Trade has unduly fostered this class, till it has become harmful to the nation at large and too numerous for the welfare of the middlemen themselves. Amongst all its other benefits Tariff Reform will do much for the nation if it tends to decrease the number of middlemen and increase the number of producers, and the transition will not be a hard one for the thousands of small rural middlemen, who are already, in part, producers.

I will not go into more details about our system of marketing, because with Mr. Wilkin's kind permission, I append at the end of this chapter certain extracts from his pamphlet. He describes far better than I could do the defects of our present system. I do not know that I entirely agree with his policy of state markets, but the choice lies between that and a fully-developed system of co-operative buying and selling. With co-operation the producer

can to a large extent fix the price of his commodity—at all events he is not entirely in the hands of middlemen; without co-operation, it is the dealer who says what the price shall be, and plays off one producer against another. When the reorganisation of London markets is undertaken, perhaps some plan of establishing a large market in connection with each railway terminus will be found feasible. Such an arrangement would obviously do away with the hopeless blocking of incoming produce which now exists.

If the ideal conditions of exchange are those in which the producer and consumer are as far as possible brought into direct communication, then surely it behoves those who introduce such a measure as Tariff Reform, which vitally affects the conditions of exchange, to review the whole situation and deal with it comprehensively.

Here again we are brought back to the need of a Royal Commission to deal properly with the subject—a commission whose guidings would be promptly acted upon and not relegated to regions of oblivion.

I am insisting on the interests of the agricultural producer, because I feel that there is great danger of these interests suffering, and being subverted to some extent by the imperial side of the question, which is indeed the most

important part of all, but to which full effect cannot be given unless the reform is introduced on sound lines, i.e., by not only accepting the proposition of taxing the food supply of Great Britain, but of taxing it in such a way as materially to benefit our primary industry. The imperial side is so well given in "Constructive Imperialism," by Lord Milner, who has an equally firm belief in the importance of the agricultural industry, and a thorough grasp of the reforms needed to improve the social condition, that every one interested in the question should read it, if he has not already done so, without delay.

The taxation of foodstuffs, then, should be the starting point for the new tariff, and this would be extended as speedily as possible to other industries which have been severely damaged or practically exterminated by unfair foreign competition. There are many industries that would come into this category—glass-making and bleaching, for instance, the first two which present themselves to my mind.

But there are other industries where the tariff should be imposed only after careful examination, and any industry that is in a very flourishing condition should be left alone, at all events for the time being; for the advent of a tariff would necessitate a certain amount of readjustment in the placing of the articles

manufactured, as well as disturbance of capital. This I know causes considerable apprehension in the minds of some important manufacturers.

Another very important subject for the consideration of the Royal Commission would be the sources of supply of foodstuffs.

The Empire could and should be self-supporting; the Mother Country should in the first place produce as much food as she possibly can, and then import the rest required from her dominions over the seas. In particular—to cite one instance only—we import about £45,000,000 worth of meat annually, only some £8,000,000 worth of which comes from our colonies. In another chapter I have pointed out how at least £20,000,000 worth more beef might be produced at home—the remaining £25,000,000 worth should clearly come from our colonies. Imported foodstuff is either given in exchange for English manufactured goods, or sent as interest on capital invested in other countries, and it is therefore necessary to guide capital into those channels most beneficial to the empire at large. Such an idea is naturally repulsive to the mind of the out-and-out Free Trader, who probably sticks to the tenets of that derelict school of political economy which emanated from Manchester.

But that the Government can to a great extent guide capital to the benefit of the whole country, is evident from the course pursued by the majority of continental countries for many years past, and more recently by our own colonial governments, in encouraging the investment of capital in desired directions.

In spite of enormous international trade, the tendency of modern industrial development is for each country to become more and more self-supporting. Italy, Spain, Russia, India, etc., which 50 years ago bought entirely from us, are now creating great manufacturing centres of their own.

In most countries the importance of the home market is preached by all politicians.

In Italy, statesmen, having first encouraged the creation of the great manufacturing districts of northern Italy, further influenced the flow of capital by pointing out to the manufacturing classes that the best way to invest their money was in developing the agricultural population around them, by teaching them to make more out of the land and so to be more prosperous and thus bigger purchasers of goods made in the cities. These country people surrounding the towns constitute the best and nearest market, said the Italian statesmen.

In England, our leaders of commerce not only thought in hemispheres, but for many

years supplied the wants of the populations of hemispheres! This fact, I think, has caused the importance of the foreign market to be exaggerated out of all proportion and to the comparative neglect of the home market, but when figures are consulted it is clear that 75% of our total output is taken by our home market, and 25% exported. So that measures that will increase the purchasing power of our home population to the extent of 5% will benefit the nation as much as a 15% increase in the export trade.

But the importance of the home market will undoubtedly be forced upon us more and more by the huge development of American manufactories.

There the output is not limited by the unwise regulation of Trades' Unions to the extent that it is in England.

According to Mr. Peirse in his book on "Free Trade for America," there are just 5,000,000 operators employed in the American factories as against 5,200,000 in England; yet the former, owing to freedom from restraint, the incentive of high wages, and the use of every possible labour-saving machine, produce annually just twice as much as their English confrères! And the limit to their productive power is not yet in sight.

The advent of this tremendous industrial

power was not foreseen by those who brought in Free Trade in England; and, apart from every other consideration, I believe that a measure of Protection will be forced upon us simply to safeguard the very existence of many of our industries, and that it will be a case of only a few years before this necessity is recognised by Free Traders themselves. How much wiser then to be beforehand in devising a policy to meet the requirements of the times!

It is interesting to note that the highly protective tariffs which exist in Canada are maintained by the Liberal and "Free Trade" party, who have been in power for so many years; they, too, recognised that a protective wall was the only way to safeguard Canadian industries from American competition.

Free Traders lose few opportunities of pointing out that whatever else Protection may do it certainly increases the cost of living.

This is too large a question to go into in detail, but I will begin with the United States, because I am actually in that country at the time that I write these lines.

The cost of living has gone up enormously, it has increased at a greater rate than the wages of the labouring man. But in this connection it must be remembered that the average wage in America provides and always has provided a much larger margin over and above the living

wage than has ever been the case in England. I have visited and kept house in the States from time to time over a period of many years: the cost of living has at least doubled. Yet taking the country at large, the people have plenty of money to spend, both in town and country; the money that clerks and the like have at their disposal is quite astonishing and can only be realised by going to places which they frequent; living may be high—double the cost of living in England—but their income is three or four times that of the same class in England.

I am not in the least trying to gloss over the fact that the increased cost of living in the United States is a very serious matter, and one which will have to be dealt with by the Government in the near future. But the relevant question here is—how much of this increase is due to Protection, how much to other causes? I see, in current papers and magazines, that the causes commonly mentioned are:—1. Tariff; 2. Trusts; 3. Gold output.

One of the causes mentioned that evidently must affect the living in all countries, irrespective of fiscal policy, is the greatly increased amount of gold in circulation. Everyone feels—even without studying the question—that money does not go so far as it formerly did. Coins are but tokens, the fewer in currency the more articles will they buy, and the higher the proportion of

tokens to articles the dearer must all commodities be. But this cause alone will not account for the great rise of prices in America; there is little doubt that the main cause is to be ascribed to the action of the giant trusts and to the tariff they impose.

Last winter the grocery trust decided to raise the cost of all groceries by 30% throughout the Southern States—and it was done!

The American farmer, quite as much as the English farmer, is in need of co-operation, for he is entirely at the mercy of these trusts, and they are a great evil in the country, injurious to the producer, consumer, and middleman alike.

Taking all circumstances into consideration, it seems quite arguable that the adoption of Free Trade in the United States would at this stage greatly benefit the country. Protection may by now have played its part, at all events it is only a question of a few years before the States will be in a position to defy all competition; they produce all the foodstuffs they require, and they can manufacture nearly every article of commerce more cheaply than can be done in any other country—I am quoting Mr. Pearce.

Elasticity is necessary in fiscal policy as in every other.

And further, Free Trade might prove the most effective weapon with which to fight the power of the trusts.

How splendid a part Protection has played in the development of the United States, even admitting that the tariff has in some measure increased the cost of living, and also that the nation at large has been taxed in favour of the manufacturing classes, is shown by the results achieved. A 600% increase on the output of manufactured goods between the years 1860 and 1900! I was in Kansas and other middle western States just before the McKinley tariff came into force; the land was occupied by a sparse population of struggling farmers, wretchedly housed and heavily in debt, with no market for their produce. The McKinley tariff gave a creative impetus to manufactures in that area, and, when I visited it four years later, large manufacturing towns stood on the sites of former straggling hamlets, big markets were provided for the farmers, who in that short period had responded to the changed condition to such an extent that they had been able to clear themselves of debt and build comfortable homes as well.

In this case the chief benefit accrued to agriculture from the way in which the tariff influenced capital, guiding it through factories to the land.

Before leaving the American farmer, I must quote a paragraph from the report of the American Department of Agriculture, and the comments thereon which appeared in a con-

temporary journal.

"Most prosperous of all years is the place to which 1909 is entitled in agriculture. The value of farm products was $8,760,000,000 (or £1,752,000,000), a gain of $869,000,000 over the preceding year." (£173,800,000.)

"The sum is one that challenges the American imagination; these virtually nine billions penetrate into every form of commerce, art, industry, society.

"It is their fructifying magic that bulges bank balances, that makes possible daring exploits in the realms of development and general expansion.

"It is their influence that supports the money markets of the country, that keeps international trade on the right side of the ledger, that largely provides employment for millions of factory operatives and an army of domestic and foreign salesmen.

"In the case of cotton, the agricultural product of a single section lays a tribute upon farthest civilization and heathendom.

"It is the motive power that drives hundreds of wheels in England."

In the United States it is clear that, in spite of the vast industrial development, the supreme importance of land is fully recognised.

The mention of cotton again raises forcibly the question of the sources of supply: every ounce

of cotton used in English factories should be grown within the empire, and there is no doubt that this could be done.

Free Traders say that we can get all the raw cotton we require from America and send the manufactured article back to that country, and to the neutral markets. Quite apart from any question of placing of capital and encouraging industry within the empire it would be well for Free Traders to realise that there is a growing feeling in America that it is unprofitable to send raw cotton to England, that it would be more advantageous to send the finished article direct to the neutral markets and even to England herself! Now to make a short comparison between the relative cost of living in the United Kingdom and any of the protected continental countries, I cannot agree with the contention of Free Traders that living in England is altogether cheaper. Take a family with £200 a year, and that sum will go further, say, in Florence or Dresden than it will in an English town of similar size; for half-a-crown one gets a better dinner in Italy, France, or Germany than one can at even a French or Italian restaurant in London.

But the really important comparison is that between the relative cost of living of the working classes in the respective countries. And I have no hesitation in saying that the French, German, or Italian housewife can, say on 12s.

a week, place before her family a more plentiful, wholesome and nourishing diet than it is possible for the English housekeeper to provide on a similar amount.

Meat and groceries are cheaper in England, but milk, eggs, bread and vegetables are cheaper on the continent.

Further, the continental working-classes eat bread of a much more nourishing kind than the wretched white bread in general use in England. And in Germany the consumption of bread is much higher per head of the population than in England. I have carefully studied the Board of Trade Bluebook on the comparative cost of living in Germany and England, and, though its figures are undoubtedly correct on paper, it does not do to judge a diet by its monetary value as shown in an official report, but by its nourishing and appetizing qualities as it appears on the table.

I venture to express a grave doubt if the painstaking gentlemen who compiled the Report in question were also good housekeepers—could themselves make puddings—and yet no one unversed in the art of making puddings should have had the temerity to offer comparisons between the cost and quality of the food in different countries.

There are many Free Traders and also, I think, some Tariff Reformers, who fear that trusts may follow the introduction of Protec-

tion, but this is not a necessary sequence ; many of the continental countries are quite free from that evil, and the existence of trusts in America must be put down to other causes than tariff.

Reference has been made to various fallacies put forward by Free Traders, but even within the Tariff Reform camp there are some enthusiasts who in their very eagerness for the cause make public statements as to what Tariff Reform will do—statements that I fear it would be hard to substantiate. This is regrettable, because the cause for Tariff Reform is so strong that it is unnecessary to strain a single point.

First there are those men who say that Tariff Reform will cure everything,. Now for farmers to think that Tariff Reform will bring in an agricultural millennium, without organisation and effort on their own part, is worse than folly. No universal panacea for evils has yet been found, and even superficial study of the problems before us is sufficient to show that fiscal reform can only be fully successful, even in its own sphere, if it be wisely married to other much needed reforms, such as land reform, improved education, improved housing of the poor, etc. And even from the point of view of party tactics, many wavering voters would support a tariff if they knew that they were also voting for other reforms dear to

their hearts. I am glad to see that Professor Hewins, in writing to the "Morning Post" after the general election of January 1910, said that in his opinion many votes were lost in the northern counties because the voters were generally interested in questions of reform, and sufficient prominence was not given in the Unionist programme to the various social reforms needed.

Secondly, there are Tariff Reformers who proclaim that a tariff will so benefit all our industries that agriculture will enjoy in its turn great advantage through the improved condition of our manufactures.

As one ever on the outlook for the promulgation of any doctrine injurious to the interest of agriculture, I strongly protest against this view. It is one that has been put forward by several leading Tariff Reformers, and yet very little consideration is sufficient to show that it is unsound. In the first place our cities are large enough, in all conscience, and afford already so huge a market that the home producer is at present able to supply only one half of the foodstuff required.

A few pages back I pointed out how the McKinley tariff had benefited farmers through encouraging the creation of factories in the middle western states, but there the conditions were very different; there were no markets available for the farmer at all. But in England

the reverse is the case—we want to benefit the manufacturer by directly enlarging the purchasing power of the rural population, and by increasing the rural population itself to ease the congestion in the urban areas.

As any tariff is bound to exert a powerful influence on capital, it will therefore be the most valuable means at the disposal of the Government for guiding capital into those channels which will most benefit the nation. Guiding capital is a very delicate operation, and must be undertaken with the greatest care. And my chief objection to the proposition of an all-round 10 per cent tariff is that it is altogether too crude a way of dealing with the matter. Can any one deny that many industries are already over-capitalised, and that one effect of a tariff on such industries will be to attract to them still more capital? And population follows capital, so that we should see still more workers attracted to the already overcrowded centres of industry. Also more capital devoted to industries which have already sufficient will be capital lost to agriculture—capital that might have been used to help to replace that £1,500,000,000 lost to the agricultural industry through a harmful fiscal policy.

Agriculture is almost the only industry which it is impossible to over-capitalize, but this subject is so well treated in M. Méline's book, " Le

Retour à la Terre" that I must refer the reader to it. I will, however, quote an interesting comment he makes on Mr. Chamberlain and his policy. I wonder if the Right Hon. gentleman has read it?

"The call of the land resounds from one end of the earth to the other. . . This universal agricultural movement is not to be explained by purely economic reasons—by the need of opening new fields of work to the labouring populations. It is due to a much deeper cause —to the instinct of self preservation which moves nations as it moves individuals, which arouses in them a presentiment of certain danger.

"Can there be a greater danger for a nation than to be entirely dependent on foreigners for its food supply? yet this is the unenviable situation of England to-day. Though a great and powerful country it must be a source of deep and real anxiety. If she were ever engaged in a great war the slightest naval reverse would be sufficient to interrupt the food supply and bring starvation to her crowded population. Even without going as far as that, a declaration of war would suffice so to raise the price of food that the Government would find itself with an almost insurmountable internal embarrassment.

"This great danger to England has proved a valuable object lesson to other European governments who have determined in consequence

that they at all events will not be exposed to a similar danger. . . So that wherever one looks one sees a decided reaction on the part of governments and parliaments in favour of agriculture, a reaction which is assuming such vast proportions that one cannot consider it an accident. Rather, it is one of those great waves of feeling which at certain times stir the minds of men and break down all barriers. The idea is beginning to take root in England, and if one tries to fathom the inner meaning of the great economic revolution set on foot by Mr. Chamberlain and pushed by him with a mastery and tenacity of conviction that nothing could discourage, one understands that it is nothing else than a return to the land—a determination to foster the agricultural industry which England has neglected for the last thirty years."

Thirdly, there is the statement that tariff will increase labourers' wages. It will undoubtedly increase employment, but does a tariff affect the rate of wage? If so, why the great variation of wage in protected countries? Why also the variation in Free Trade England? There is a difference amounting to nearly 50% in the rate of wage of rural labourers in different counties. If low wages are given little work is done in return; it seems, therefore, to me that the rate of wages depends more on the standard of the workman than on the existence or non-existence of a

tariff. This is an important point for those who have to put Tariff Reform before the minds of working men.

There is one more doctrine, held by Free Traders, that I must comment upon before bringing this chapter to a close.

It is very commonly said that a large excess of imports over exports is a sign of the wealth of a country. This is undoubtedly true, but it is not a sign that the capital of the country is invested to the best advantage of the nation or of the whole empire. The excess of imports represents interest on capital invested abroad, undoubtedly as a rule to the benefit of the financier, but by no means necessarily to the benefit of the empire: millions go to develop foreign countries while our colonies are crying out for more capital.

On paper England is still the richest country in the world in proportion to her population, but the money is not well distributed. If ten square miles in an entirely rural district in England were compared with a similar area in France or Germany, there is no doubt that the average wealth of the people in such an area would prove far higher on the continent than it is here.

The wealth of England has become too much centralized in the small class of financiers living in the great cities, and one of the best methods of securing a better distribution of money

throughout the country is to win back for agriculture that £1,500,000,000 of capital taken from it.

There is one point in connection with the taxation of foodstuffs which Free Traders should bear in mind, and that is, that the great Fathers of political economy all admit that it may at times be necessary to protect an infant industry. And I would here make the most of this admission, because—I say it in all seriousness—agriculture, reformed as we would see it, must be classed as an infant industry and must be protected against the adult and vigorous growth of organised agriculture on the continent.

Once more, Tariff Reform by itself cannot solve the problem of the land, but it must be the starting point for other reforms; it must furnish the sinews of war—money. A certain definite proportion of the receipts from the food taxes ought to be ear-marked for the development of agriculture—for education, banks, co-operation, transport.

I firmly believe that a tariff on foodstuffs, coupled with a diminution of the tariff of the middleman and with improved conditions of marketing, will not raise the cost of living; but even if it did the agricultural industry is so essential to the nation that it must be made to flourish, and money spent to this end will be well spent. The great cities that are always

increasing in size must realise that either they will have to aid in restoring prosperity to agriculture, or they must supply free food to a vast and increasing army of degenerates within their borders.

I have met several Liberal Free Traders who, though they would hear of no tariff on manufactured goods, were so keenly alive to the importance of agriculture that they would agree to a duty on foodstuffs. And I end this chapter by expressing the hope that that excellent type of Liberal may increase and multiply with the utmost rapidity.

Excerpts from Mr. Wilkin's pamphlet.

LONDON MARKETS

"Is it true that you have great complaints to make of the London wholesale markets?

"Yes, it is quite true that they are unsuitable for small men. Notwithstanding the enormous growth of trade, induced by the railways, there appears to be no greater number of markets in London than there were two or three centuries ago. The Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. 14, page 829, gives the names of the eleven markets existing in the time of Stowe the Chronicler, which correspond nearly with the eleven at present existing, and continues, 'Since the removal of Hungerford market to make way for Charing Cross Station, Covent Garden has

remained the only vegetable and flower market of importance in the Metropolis, although vegetables of a cheap kind are sold at the Borough and Spitalfields, also at Farringdon Road and the Great Northern Railway;' and again on page 828, vol. 14, 'In 1328 a charter was granted to the Corporation of London by Edward III., conveying to it the sole right to establish markets within seven miles circuit of the city. The system, though now broken up—even in regard to provisions, so far as the retail trade is concerned—remains intact in regard to the vending of certain provisions, wholesale.'

"What statesman shall win immortality by breaking up the rest?

"Are not the London markets the biggest and best markets in the country?

"Do other people complain of them?

"Is there any prospect of success in promoting retail markets?

"'The return they (London markets) make to the toiler is a scurvy one.' Sir John Rolleston (*Financial Review*).

"'If we send things there we get nothing for 'em.'
—*Small Holder.*

"'Gluts are the most ordinary things in the world.'
—*Salesman.*

"Empty carts block the way so that waggons loaded with produce cannot get in. Space is insufficient. Prices are generally low and unprofitable. These markets are a real hindrance

to trade, because they make trade unprofitable for the growers. How long shall they block the way? Buyers are driven away by bad deliveries, and sellers by bad prices. They discourage English growers, and encourage the sale of foreign fruit and vegetables in large lots, to the immense detriment of home-grown produce. Thus, being wholesale and glutted with cheap foreign produce in busy times they are no use to the small holder. The home counties are computed to lose £100,000 per annum in these bad markets. They send up their best produce under the delusion that they are dealing with the merchant princes of the best market in the world, whereas in reality they are only supplying the lowly costermongers with job lots at half price. Covent Garden market, especially, monopolises the most valuable market site in London, because of its proximity to the West End, but it is meanly managed, cribbed, cabined and confined. Outside the market, in the dirty narrow streets, waggon loads of choice produce wait for hours and lose their market. Hundreds of empty carts bar the drivers' way to the salesmen's stands, and the drivers fiercely contest every inch of room. The writer himself has gone through this experience, from 4.30 to 7.30 a.m.

"After urgent remonstrances he has had to wait on the top of the waggon and then see his precious peas divided amongst the costermongers

at half-price. This market, however, has a redeeming feature, namely: if a small holder *can get in* he may hire a square yard or two of flagstones in the open, on which to pitch his produce, and stand there and sell it to passers-by at retail prices for ready money, and thus save probably 30 per cent. at the least. This ought to be possible in every corner of London.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the condition of the markets is deplorable, from the market gardener's and the small holder's point of view: they appear to be conducted in the interests of privileged individuals, who constitute a monoply disastrous to the welfare of the workers on the land.

"From the point of view of the State, the markets of London and the country, if well organised with adequate root and branch reform, could have immense possibilities of wealth for the State, and be well calculated to settle spontaneously upon the land the large rural population in comfort and prosperity.

"Why are the home counties poor?

"It has been stated that they lose £100,000 per annum by trading with their astute friends in the London wholesale markets.

"Let us see what ground there is for such an assertion. Take the example of one crop, concerning which a definite estimate has been published, namely, the strawberry crop, valued

at £1,500,000 sterling (whether that is too much or too little matters not for the purpose of this illustration), the wholesale and retail prices are well known, and it is practically certain that at least £500,000 value, that is, one-third of the estimated total, has gone through the retail trade for immediate consumption, the remainder being dealt with by the jam makers or other wholesalers. Our computation in a precise form is as follows: The retailers received from the public £500,000, selling the fruit at the rate of 2d., 4d., 6d., 8d., averaging 5d. per pound. In some districts none was sold under 6d. per pound. The growers only received from the wholesale market salesman £250,000. How is that known?

"Thus:—The daily returns of fruit sold wholesale are at the rate of 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., averaging 2½d. per pound; very few have had a return at 4d., nor made a better average than 2d. per pound, but let it go as 2½d., as that is the price of the published estimate referred to.

"From these figures it is deduced that in certain circumstances, as detailed, the growers have received only half out of £500,000 received by the retailers.

"Where has the rest gone?

"It is lost to the country producer in the double marketing which he ought to avoid if he can. He has laboured at his task 12

months, and then gets only half the value of his labour, whilst the middlemen between them, for a few hours' work, receive half his property! Are the middlemen partners of his, or servants? He, poor man, being not on the spot, has spent 50 per cent. in marketing, while the large retail traders, like the London Stores, require only 15 or 16 per cent. for expenses of trading and profit over the whole year. Why are the home counties poor? This is why: they are condemned to sell in one out of three wholesale markets which are engineered entirely to the profit of Londoners and entirely to the loss of countrymen!

"The grievance may be put in a few words:— The rural producers get less than half of the price which the public pay. Moral: 'Serve the public.' You cannot! The State defends the chartered markets."

CHAPTER VI

SMALL HOLDINGS AND AGRICULTURE

THE sound development of small holdings lies at the root of land reform, just as land reform must be the basis of all social reform.

If the social evils from which Great Britain is suffering are to a significant extent caused by so large a proportion of the population being divorced from the land : if a landless proletariat constitutes, as Disraeli pointed out years ago, a grave national danger, then the remedy must be to recreate a large, well-educated and financially sound rural population.

For upwards of 100 years Parliament passed Acts which legalized the enclosing of common lands, and gave its sanction to the systematic withdrawal of land from the people. It is not here a question of whether land in the form of commons was put to the best economic use, or no; a larger subject is before us—that of national welfare, which demands that the greatest possible number of people shall be directly connected with the land.

Parliament has taken away the land; it must now reverse the process, and by careful legislation increase the number of men on the land. The few efforts of politicians in this direction during recent years have not on the whole been remarkable for their success; the hearts of the workers have not been in the work. Unionists and Conservatives have been altogether wanting so far as a land policy is concerned—there was no sign of such a policy until quite lately, when, immediately before the election of January 1910, Sir Gilbert Parker hastily sketched out a scheme based on suggestions of Mr. Jesse Collings' which Unionists for years had refused to adopt.

This policy has been formally endorsed by the Unionist leaders—and we agriculturists must, I suppose, be thankful for small mercies and hope that it will finally develop into a working scheme worthy of adoption.

To my mind the Unionists would have been wiser in adopting the policy suggested by Mr. Pratt. It is more elastic, and it combines all that is good in the system of ownership with that of tenancy; above all, it suggests the soundest of all methods of developing small holdings, i.e., by letting farms to co-operative societies. Mr. Pratt is one of our best practical men, and he has devoted years to the study of land problems; yet he was not listened to, nor, as far as I know, was his scheme even carefully considered.

The Small Holdings Act of 1907 is the most comprehensive of modern Acts dealing with land, and it has certain very good features.

It is erroneous to suppose that the main provisions of this Act emanated from the extreme Radicals, Socialists and nationalisers of land. There was only one group of reformers in readiness with a definite scheme for developing small holdings when the present Government came into office. I refer to a little society which had come into being some three years before, through the energy of Mr. Charles Roden Buxton, and which had commissioned Mrs. Roland Wilkins (née Miss Jebb) to undertake a scientific investigation of the circumstances that had actually contributed to the formation of existing small holdings in different parts of England. The results of the investigation, never before attempted on these lines, were naturally invaluable as a basis for legislation; and when the Government turned their attention to the question they took over almost in their entirety the suggestions of this little society. Mr. L. Harcourt introduced the Bill and Mr. John Burns made it his special care, watching over it in its committee stage, until it finally became the fully-fledged Act as we know it.

Though the Liberals have no official land policy, I honestly think that during the past few years they have shown a greater interest in land

than have their opponents. Whether that interest is altogether good and sound is quite another matter.

If the Liberals have no formulated land policy they have at least an unofficial one held by an ever-increasing section of the party—the nationalization of land.

The nationalization of land is too large a question and too far removed from practical politics to be dealt with here. England is not ready and for years to come will not be ready for even the discussion of the advantages or disadvantages of such a policy: that being the case it is unjust that the cost of nationalizing inconsiderable bits of land should be thrown on the shoulders of struggling small holders.

Yet this is the effect of the Act of 1907; by its provisions the small holder purchases his holding by instalments, not for himself, but for the County Council.

It would be well if politicians could be made to understand that a Small Holdings Act developing small tenancy, or a Land Purchase Bill developing small proprietorship, does not constitute a land policy. And that is the chief objection to the Act of 1907: it does not constitute a policy. It may deal with part—an inherent and important part of the land problem; but because it provides only for part, and is not associated with measures dealing with the other

sides of the problem, it is necessarily to a great extent ineffectual.

Wherever small holdings have been actively developed on the continent, reform of rural education has always preceded the movement, and the creation of credit banks and encouragement of co-operation has come hand in hand with the placing of people on the land.

So much for general criticism of the Act.

Let us consider for a moment the execution of the Act.

Most Ccounty Councils, I think, honestly do their best to carry out the intentions of the Act, but it is only a small percentage of members of Small Holding Committees which at all believes that it is possible to make these small holdings pay. The rest wholly doubt the eventual success of the movement, and, worse than this, though they will admit in theory that more people than now should be settled on the land, they do not realise that every authority concerned must for the good of the whole country increase the number of small holders, and that if one line of action does not answer, another must be tried.

The County Council is now the supreme local authority. It does not exist merely to give effect more or less heartily to legislation passed by parliament; it has a higher duty to perform, for it has now the power to devise measures for

the benefit of the inhabitants of the district. It has a duty not only towards the new race of small holders that is springing up, but also to the old-established small holders who often have a hard enough time through not knowing how best to treat their holdings.

Is it universally realised that about one half of the agriculturists of England who are not farm labourers are farmers of under 50 acres?

This is just the class that of itself can do least to improve its condition—the class that wants most help.

County Councils have Whiskey money to spend on technical education, yet they have been slow in devising means of putting beneficial technical instruction within the reach of this class. They should not deny to the struggling agriculturists the benefit of their fair share of this money. And it is to be hoped that when County Councils draw up plans for utilizing the grants from the Development Fund, they will remember that these grants should be considered as supplementary to that proportion of Whiskey money which for years past they should have been spending on education beneficial to agriculture.

County Councils have worked very hard since the passing of the Act; the amount of work done has been out of all proportion to the results obtained. The transfer of land is needlessly troublesome, and the whole process should

have been simplified before bringing in any Small Holdings Act; but of course a party which is practically pledged to the nationalization of land does not want to simplify its transfer, but rather, as shown by the Budget of 1909, to make the process more difficult. From an administrative point of view the chief evil has been in having to deal with so many individual applicants for holdings; in a large number of districts the original applicants have disappeared before the holdings were ready for them. Moreover the continued dealing with scattered individuals will be a frequent source of trouble and expense to County Councils.

Again, it is to be feared that in spite of every precaution on the part of the commissioners small holdings will be started in unsuitable places; the mere fact of their being started all over England, in every County Council District, makes it impossible to avoid this pitfall.

I remember in this connection Prince Kropotkin's answer when I asked him his opinion as to the best way of developing small holdings. "Begin by developing small holdings in districts where they already exist—do not try to create or manufacture them in districts where there is no natural tendency towards small holdings." It seems to me that this principle lies at the root of success: in time, with the development of the movement, small holdings would naturally

be started in all counties as a real and not a manufactured demand arises.

But putting people on the land in a country like England, where, in general terms, a small holding tradition does not exist, is a very difficult proceeding. There is only one way in which success can be achieved on a large scale, and that is by settling the small holders in colonies, or, better still, by letting the land to co-operative societies. Nothing that I have seen in the practical working of the Small Holdings Act leads me to change or modify that view.

In the early stages of development the colony system should have been adopted almost to the exclusion of finding small bits of land for scattered individuals. Most of the opposition and bad feeling created amongst sitting tenants has been due to the forcible taking of land from larger farms for individual applicants, whereas when once the movement is well on foot it will be time enough for County Councils to satisfy one or two applicants in each parish. But even at this stage it is not too late to adopt the colony system. The colonies should be founded in really suitable places. A whole farm or farms should be taken and divided up, and then the small holder must go to the place where he can get his holding ; this of itself would form a valuable test. In America men will go hundreds of miles to

take a farm in a district where small farms are being developed in colonies. Why should they not do the same in England?

This method would be of great advantage to the County Council, because it would simplify its work in every way; and it would be of equal advantage to the small holders because it would place them in a better position to co-operate and to receive instruction in the best methods of cultivation.

Mr. Pratt puts the scheme so well in his article in the "Standard" on the advantages of the taking of land by co-operative societies, that I quote at length—

"I realise that what I have stated in my previous article may seem very discouraging to those Unionists who have been looking to peasant proprietary as their 'Bulwark against Socialism,' but I have thought it my duty to state the facts as I have found them and to offer what seems to me right guidance and direction in a matter less of theorizing than of hard, practical fact, in which the interests of those of our fellow-countrymen whom it is desired to send 'back to the land' must be regarded as paramount.

"So I come to the question—'What should the Unionists do?' and thereon depends in the first place the subsidiary question, 'Should they abandon their aim of creating a larger body of

peasant proprietors ?'

"My answer to this is that they need not necessarily adopt this course. I consider that without seeking to force unduly the principle of ownership and creating a possibly artificial demand for it (in the same way as the Finance Bill would force on the market land not yet 'ripe for building purposes'), they should certainly afford greater facilities for the ownership of small holdings, so that cultivators, or would-be cultivators, who did wish to purchase could realise their aspirations more easily, and, if possible, at less expense in the matter of fees and costs than at present. The acquisition of land and the re-sale thereof in case of need under fair conditions should approach as nearly to the buying and selling of other kinds of property as circumstances will permit.

"The fact that comparatively few persons took advantage of the purchase clauses of the Small Holdings Act of 1892, which gave power to County Councils to buy land and resell it in small lots, is attributed by Unionists to 'some radical defects' in the details of the measure. For these defects the Unionists have, it is declared, sought in vain during the present Parliament to secure a remedy. Here, then, a Unionist government in search of a land policy could begin by curing the defects in question, and by making such amendments

of or additions to the existing legislation on small holdings as would give to cultivators really desirous of purchasing a holding every reasonable opportunity for doing so that they could desire. This procedure would supply the means of meeting an actual want and give the principle of ownership at least a better chance of development where or when it might be adopted with advantage.

"I cannot but conclude, therefore, that while every reasonable facility should certainly be afforded for meeting any genuine desire for the ownership of small holdings, the development of a system of co-operative tenancy on the lines I have indicated would be of great assistance in facilitating the settlement of more people on the land, and that not only would it offer still greater prospects of economic success, but it would also, in effect, prove quite as strong a bulwark as peasant proprietary against the advance of Socialistic ideas. There is, in any case, room for both systems, and a Unionist government could not do better than let the small holders have their choice.

"In a concluding article I propose to deal with co-operation, credit, and the revival of rural life.

"But, in view of the considerations already presented, a Unionist Government should, I think, go farther than this and encourage also, as an alternative system, the co-operative rent-

ing of land, either direct from a landowner, or through a local authority.

"Under this system the landowner or the County Council deals not with a number of individual units, but with a group of small holders formed into a registered co-operative society. The society rents a farm as a whole and sub-lets it by mutual arrangement among the members, on such terms as will cover the rent which the society must pay, plus a small charge for expenses. The landowner or the County Council thus receives the total rent in a lump sum from the society, and is relieved both of the trouble of collecting from all the tenants and of any risk of loss. A committee formed by the small holders themselves can collect the rents with less friction than an agent or an official could do. The fact that the members of the society are jointly and severally responsible gives them an incentive to bring moral suasion to bear on defaulting neighbours, while the Board of Agriculture requires that such land-renting societies should have a share capital, called or uncalled, equal to three years' rent of the land it takes over, or, alternatively, should pay six months' rent in advance and have uncalled share capital equal to the amount of rent for another eighteen months.

"The main advantage to the small holders is that they can get the land at a lower rent.

A landowner will not only deal more readily with such a society than with a number of individuals, but he can afford to let the society have a farm of, say, 100, 200, or 300 acres at the same rental as he would charge to a large farmer, whereas he would have to ask more, in proportion, from 20 or 30 persons among whom he divided the same amount of land in separate tenancies. The local authority, again, is saved the salaries of rent collectors and the risk of bad debts while the members of the society can save various fees and expenses by themselves undertaking work that would otherwise have to be paid for.

"Then, as the small holders forming the society may suffer loss through the inability of one of their number to pay his rent, and their own obligation to make good his default, they generally have a feeling of good fellowship with their neighbour and are ready to help him out of a difficulty, whether in giving him advice based on their collective wisdom, assisting him with his crops, relieving him of some of his land, should he have taken more than he can work, or allowing him time in which to pay his rent. On the other hand a sense of the responsibility assumed will make the society careful not to admit to membership undesirable persons likely to neglect their land or who are regarded as financially untrustworthy; while if, in spite of

this precaution, an individual holder should neglect his land the committee of the society will speedily call him to account.

"In these and other ways not only are efficient economic conditions maintained, but good moral influences are exercised as well. Mutual interest among groups of individuals well acquainted with one another, is, in fact, found to be a far more powerful agency than official supervision in maintaining industry and integrity.

"Still another practical advantage for the small holder is that transfer from one holding to a larger one can (when the land is available) be readily arranged by the society. If, alternatively, a holder should give up his holding, it falls back, not on the landowner, but on the members of the society, who must make good his rent, or, failing another applicant, add the vacated land to that of one or more of their number."

The two main objects to be attained by the creation of a large system of small holdings are, first, to get the people back on the land, and second—(sadly little notice is taken of this)—to put more land under intensive culture and so increase the supply of home grown food.

There is the very probable danger that many scattered applicants who are now being provided with little bits of land taken, perhaps, from a good farmer, will not only fail to put the land

to its best use, but actually to treat it as well as did the larger farmer. The failure, or partial failure, of one small holder does incalculable harm to the movement, and far more than effaces the good that 100 successful examples should produce on the public mind.

In most continental countries where small holdings have for years formed a striking feature of the agricultural system, and where the cultivators have long been accustomed to the idea of intensive farming, a more or less perfect system of disseminating expert knowledge exists —actual schools for small holders are to be found.

In England, where no tradition in respect of small holdings or intensive cultivation exists, no schools, and no expert knowledge are provided either for the newly-created small holders, or to improve the methods of the thousands of long established small holders. It is to my mind extraordinary that those who have been most active in advocating the development of small holdings have so little insisted upon the necessity of starting simultaneously demonstration centres for small cultivators, as well as a system of credit banks. They seem to have thought that access to the land will be all sufficient, failing to recognise that access to capital is of equal importance.

In the days of private banks the cultivators

of the soil found it much easier to borrow money than it is now; joint stock banks have for the most part swallowed up the old banks, and they will not advance money on the personal qualities, or, indeed, upon any security that the individual tenant farmer can give. Admitting the new financial conditions it has become necessary to find a security that will be accepted and this needed security is provided by the mutual guarantee of a group of individuals which forms the basis of a credit bank system available alike for tenant or owner.

In the Small Holdings Act I know that provision was made for the creation of credit banks; but practically no steps have been taken to give effect to these provisions, and even now there is no guarantee that the matter will be taken up and dealt with in a comprehensive way.

The framers of that Act seem to have thought that the practical knowledge of husbandry and of country life in general on the part of the applicant constitutes a sufficient guarantee that the holding will be well cultivated. They do not appear to have taken into consideration the fact that most of the newly created small holders will be either semi-tradesmen or labourers from large farms where extensive cultivation is in vogue.

How can such persons without expert guidance put the land to the best use?

This is the crux of the whole problem. There is no use in dumping people on the land and leaving them to shift for themselves: if this is to be the "policy" then all that can be said is that a system of tenancy will prove less disastrous than a system of ownership.

If the people freshly placed on the land are to succeed they must be shown how to make the utmost out of the land. And how can these newly started small holders be expected to make the utmost out of the land, when even old-established small holders in such ideal centres as Spalding and the Vale of Evesham are not doing so?

At Spalding, though the land is about the richest in England, the average yield per acre does not equal the average for the whole, good and poor land alike, of Belgium—because the small holders (having been left to shift for themselves) do not practise the best methods of cropping and because they do not co-operate.

At Evesham the introduction of a French gardener by Mr. John Idiens gave a practical demonstration of how much more produce could be obtained per acre by the adoption of new methods.

If the whole question of small holdings could only be dealt with as one entirely outside party politics there would be some hope of a satisfactory solution. There seems, however, little

prospect of such a course being adopted: already the counterblast to the Radical system of developing small holding tenancies has appeared in the Unionist policy of small holding ownership.

It is clear that every facility should be provided to enable any suitable person to buy land; especially is it essential for every sitting tenant irrespective of the size of his holding to have the opportunity to purchase that holding should the occasion arise.

In some parts of the country there is a desire for ownership, in others that inclination is entirely wanting.

In any case, it is clearly better that the small holder should begin his career as a tenant; even if he purchases the holding later on he should find his legs as a tenant—just as a child must learn to walk before it can run. A safe guiding rule would therefore be "through tenancy to ownership."

The case is quite different of a man well versed in the art of cultivating a small holding, as he could in most instances without difficulty pay the purchase money instalments; and there ought to be special financial machinery for providing loans for the purchase of land which would be quite distinct from the credit banks that are meant to provide short loans to act as the tenant's working capital.

I think many people make too strong a point of the indebtedness of the continental peasant proprietors. In England it is fatal for a small holder to run into debt if he is only getting about half of the potential value out of his holding, but where small farmers are doing really well indebtedness is by no means a bad sign; it is quite good business to borrow capital at 3% if the farmer is pretty certain that he will make 10% on the amount borrowed.

The great obstacle in the way of the extension of small holdings is the cost of equipment, an obstacle formidable alike to County Councils and to landowners. By far the easiest and most practical way of overcoming this difficulty is to let the small holders do their own equipping and even when possible build their own houses. Of course they can do this only if they combine and form co-operative societies; if they will adopt this course then equipment and buildings will be secured at the lowest possible cost—for the men will by degrees do much of the work themselves.

That all this is within the scope of practical politics is shown by the fact that the Agricultural Organisation Society has already 111 branch societies organised for the purpose of acquiring land.

County Councils could do much more than they have done in the past to encourage the

creation of these societies, but apparently it will be necessary first of all to persuade not only agriculturists, but County Councillors also, of the advantages of co-operation.

It seems hardly possible that the essential advantages of co-operation could be misunderstood by any County Councillors, but I have actually heard it said in more than one County Council—when the letting of land to a co-operative society was before the committee—that such a proceeding would be dangerous in the extreme, as the men would combine to pay no rent. This objection was in each case taken quite seriously

Co-operative societies for taking land will probably be formed most easily in the neighbourhood of towns; for instance, one has been doing very well at Leicester for some years.

In the development of the movement a certain amount of method should be observed in the situation chosen for small holdings.

Economy in transport is a very important consideration, so that each large city ought to be surrounded by an inner circle of very small holdings, market gardens producing the vegetables and small fruit; and then an outer circle of larger small holdings producing milk and dairy produce, the farms getting larger as the distance from the market increases.

Naturally this cannot become a hard and

fast rule, but I have often noticed how such distribution has been effected, probably without conscious forethought, on the continent, most of the cities getting all their supplies from the immediate neighbourhood. The reverse is largely the case with us, and fields of grass, roots or corn are often found almost within the city limits, while the main supply of common vegetables, such as cabbages, comes from the south of Spain, for instance.

Talking of cabbages: a few years ago I was wandering amongst the market gardens in the suburbs of Bayreuth, and fell into conversation with an old German who had lived in England. "You English are funny people," he said, "you don't care whether your cabbages are fresh or stale, whether they travel one mile or 1,000 miles. Now we Germans are fond of cabbages, they are to us a necessity; our tariff would make them a luxury if we did not grow all we wanted, but we do, and they are cheaper than they are in England."

But it will not always do to endeavour to develop the very small holdings quite near large towns: there are many cases where the land would be too costly, and as long as it rests with County Councils to provide small holdings the question of initial outlay will be a most important one. In fact, in my opinion County Councils have not gone sufficiently into

the question of providing motor transport from the outset. Of course this could only be done for groups of small holders—the colony system again.

But there is no doubt that in many cases it would be economically sound to settle a colony, say seven miles from the market or station, if by so doing suitable land could be obtained at a greatly reduced price; and to devote public money to starting a motor service. The small holders would naturally pay a fair rate for transport, and the venture should cost the County Council nothing—should, in fact, even prove remunerative; but for some reason there seems to be a strong feeling against putting a comparatively small sum of public money to such a use—even though it were the means of saving thousands of pounds of purchase money.

Again, to help this rural development as directly as possible, every County Council should have its agricultural organiser or adviser —corresponding to the "Agronomes" who play so important a part in the rural development in Belgium. They and their staffs would get into close touch with the small holders, visiting them on their holdings, telling them what seeds to buy, the names of the best firms, the best variety of manures, the best way of marketing their produce.

I hold that demonstration farms could be

made to serve a useful purpose; but it would be essential that these demonstration farms should be financially successful—and many people think, and possibly quite correctly, that no County Council holding would ever pay!

Still, demonstration farms in other countries are successful—all depends on the man who runs them. The right man ought to be found and then be given a free hand. It is most important that small holders should be shown, for instance, the highest number of cows that could be maintained on an arable holding of a given size. I have already referred to the Dane who keeps 50 cows on 50 acres; few in this country realize that such a thing is possible. Of course the said Dane buys in cake and concentrated food. Another demonstration was made by one of the American colleges, where the question was asked how many cows is it possible to keep entirely on 20 acres of arable land without buying any foodstuff? Only two crops were grown on the 20 acres, maize and lucerne; the maize was made into silage, the lucerne into hay. The silage provided the moist food, the hay the dry.

At the beginning of the experiment, some years ago, 6 cows were kept, but latterly 16 cows have been kept on the 20 acres.

All this work is so important that it should be done, somehow. If we are afraid to see County Councils create demonstration farms we might

at least utilize the experience of some of the very successful and intelligent holders, and have subsidised illustrations, paying the said intelligent holders so much per annum to crop their land in certain specified ways and to allow parties to visit their holdings. We have plenty of these brilliant examples if we look for them. What we want is to make the average holders realise what can be done and what actually is being done in their own district. I here give as an example the achievement of a small holder near Spalding, a tenant of 6½ acres. He sold off his holding corn, potatoes, pigs and poultry, as follows:

	Corn.	Potatoes.	Pigs.	Poultry, Eggs.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
1907	44	13	66	34	157
1908	47	-	56	41½	144½
1909	33½	-	74	35	142½
					£444

These sales he booked; probably a few small sales were missed. The average would not be less than £150 per annum. He expended during the three years £200 upon purchased feeding stuffs, and consumed part of his home-grown corn, pigs, potatoes, etc., valued at £35. His net income averaged £80, the equivalent of a wage of over 30/- a week.

I can deal with the question of small holdings only in a most cursory fashion, because

not only could a whole book be written on the subject, but already several most excellent books have been written by Mr. Pratt and Mrs. Wilkins. In Mrs. Wilkins' book there is a most interesting account of the effect produced by the development of small holdings in a certain neighbourhood on the local poor rate.

Land reform is very closely related to poor law reform, and I am sure that what is seen on a small scale in that district would prove to be the case throughout the country—that with the successful development of small holdings will come a great reduction of the poor rates; in fact, the sound and wise extension of small holdings should prove one of the most effective means of grappling with the whole problem of poor relief.

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION

IF the interests of the agricultural industry are ever to be successfully consolidated, Agricultural Societies and Unions, in short associations of all descriptions, must play a much more important part than they have in the past. In other words, agricultural organisations must be supported far more strongly than now by agriculturists. Every farmer should belong to some effective society or other; at present it is only a small percentage of farmers who belong to any society.

I will give a short resumé of the history of agricultural organisation and of the older societies before considering the newer ones, and the tendencies at work which have called them into existence.

The leading societies of the older type are—The Royal Agricultural Society, The Central and Affiliated Chambers of Agriculture, Lord Winchilsea's Agricultural Union, and the Agricultural Organisation Society; this last, though not itself an old society, is the outcome

of Lord Winchilsea's movement, and so can be classed with the older societies.

The Royal Agricultural Society is the organisation most in the public view. It issues the best of agricultural year books, and it holds a great annual show, which attracts the attention not only of the United Kingdom but of agriculturists throughout the world. This association has done splendid work in helping to bring English stock up to the high level at which it stands, and in putting before the cultivator who visits the show the most up-to-date machinery of all sorts. But to my mind the moment has come when it should make a new departure, and actively concern itself with the practical education of agriculturists of all classes.

I believe one or two of the county agricultural societies have already shown some interest in practical farm classes, and if all county societies whose finances permit would aid the local education authorities to develop this kind of work much good could be done. I do not know if it would be possible for the executive council of the Royal to send out a recommendation on this point to the county societies.

The Royal Agricultural Society takes no part whatever in politics, and therefore does not come into the category of those other agricultural associations which I wish to describe in some detail —associations which are consciously or uncon-

sciously endeavouring to consolidate the interests of the agricultural industry. It is as essential that such associations should be intensely political as it is that they should be entirely non-party in character.

The first association of this type to appear was the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture formed in 1865.

Though at one time the Tory element may have dominated to some extent, any impartial observer will, I think, admit that the debates at the monthly meetings in London have been for years non-party in character, or at all events that both political points of view have received a fair hearing. Those who founded this society undoubtedly hoped that it would become representative of the whole of the agricultural interests of England. That it never attained to this position is undoubtedly due entirely to the attitude of landowners and that of the farmers themselves—to their apathy and failure to understand the absolute need of combination. The monthly meetings of the Central Chamber are certainly impressive gatherings of agriculturists, and might indeed be termed the Farmers' Parliament if only the membership of the Chambers were 100,000 instead of 25,000.

The Royal and many of the County Agricultural Societies have large sums at their disposal; shows are attractive, prizes tangible—there is

a large class of professional prize takers—and so money pours in.

The work of the Chambers is of a quieter description: much useful work is done almost unseen, and farmers are apt in consequence to question its usefulness, so that this association has never had an income at all equal to its potential power for aiding agriculture. Yet in spite of all difficulties the United Chambers have done much. The monthly meetings held in London are, as I have said, most excellently supported, and they are of practical use in keeping agricultural topics to the front in the press.

Further, the work done by the committees in reporting on and criticising all Bills affecting agriculture is excellent; but when we come to the work done in Parliament there is a different tale to tell.

The chief problem for the agriculturist is how to make the agricultural influence a power within the House of Commons; how to make the members of the House—ever most prodigal at election time in regard to pledges—fulfil those pledges and give the heed that it deserves to the opinion of the agricultural voter.

The guiding principle of the Chambers has been from the first to unite landowner, tenant and labourer into one society, undoubtedly the right ideal, but alas, it has not been realised;

the landowners have not played their part, and though many good tenant farmers belong, they are for the most part large farmers, and so the interests of the small farmer do not receive sufficient attention, and when it comes to the labourer the failure is complete, as there are no labour members.

The next important movement with a view to the organising of agriculturists was set on foot by my kinsman, Lord Winchilsea, a man who worked himself to death for the cause of agriculture, and to whom, more than to any other individual, is due that general stirring of the dry bones of agriculture that is now so noticeable. It is sad that he did not live to see that keenness aroused; too often he had but dull apathy to bear with, or even active opposition.

His scheme was on lines similar to that of the Chambers of Agriculture, viz., the formation of a society uniting landowner, tenant and labourer—a three-fold cable. His association took its beginning in 1893 under the designation of "The National Agricultural Union." It differed from the Chambers of Agriculture in that it made a determined effort to bring in the rural labourer, and the amount of success in this direction was quite sufficient to prove that the rural labourer can be drawn in—can be interested in the general movement if the right measures are taken. Though this organisation at one

time numbered some 400 branches it did not long survive in its original form; it had not been working years enough to continue by itself without the guidance of its moving spirit.

The immediate outcome of Lord Winchilsea's Association, or rather its child and successor, is the Agricultural Organisation Society. This is non-political, and its chief aim is to organise the business side of the agricultural industry. It is the great propagandist body for co-operation among agriculturists and is doing excellent work. A society whose aim is to organise agriculture for business purposes—the industry above all others in need of organisation—ought to be recognised as one of the most important bodies in existence, and it should have unlimited funds at its disposal. But, needless to say, it has not. At the present stage of development of the agricultural movement money could not be more patriotically spent than by assisting this society.

I wish some millionaire would study the question of agriculture and what its prosperity means to the nation, and then would inform himself how essential a part co-operation must play in the work of agricultural reform, and what good work the Agricultural Organisation Society is doing; and having realised all this, that he would subscribe, say, £10,000 a year to the funds!

Other societies and causes are supported by large sums of money, but agriculture remains a Cinderella, a poor Cinderella that has yet to find her shoe!

The Agricultural Organisation Society has 300 branches, of which 134 are societies formed for the purpose of acquiring land to be divided up amongst its members in small holdings. Thus it is directly encouraging the soundest of all methods of increasing the number of people connected with the land. It has also started a system of credit banks which it is to be hoped will grow speedily and flourish, and it is the business of politicians, local authorities and landowners to see that they do so. Especially it is to be hoped that local authorities will utilize this society when practical steps are taken to organise and develop the co-operative movement throughout the country; it is the only body capable of doing the work effectively.

For their work in connection with small holdings I am glad to say the society receives practical recognition from the Board of Agriculture in the form of an annual grant of £1,200. It seems almost incredible that this small grant from the Government should apparently have the effect of making some people think it is no longer necessary for them to subscribe to the society—it ought rather to make them give more, for the Board of Agriculture contributes

one pound for every pound subscribed.

I have roughly sketched out the leading features of the older order of Agricultural Associations.

I do not think I should have to go on to describe the new class at all if the local Chambers of Agriculture had displayed the vitality which is conspicuous in the Central Chamber in London. But alas! in many districts of England landowners ceased regularly to attend the meetings of their Chamber, and business dealings got more and more into the hands of tradesmen; it became hard to find farmers capable of acting as branch secretaries or willing to give up the time; and so a sense of dissatisfaction grew among a large number of farmers who felt that something had to be done and that the Chambers were not doing it.

This is undoubtedly the cause of the stir and movement among farmers which has been so noticeable during the last few years; this wish and determination to do something has found expression in quite a galaxy of agricultural societies. The leading spirits have very generally felt that attempts in the past to unite landowner, tenant and labourer in one body have failed, and that therefore the new associations must be composed of farmers with no landlord members at all.

By far the most important of these new societies is the Farmers' Union, founded in 1904 as the Lincolnshire Farmers' Union; but so rapid has been its growth, so marked the way in which the movement was taken up in other counties, that only four years after its foundation it was found desirable to form the National Farmers' Union, with offices in London and a membership of over 15,000.

I have been closely connected with this Union from its start; in fact, I believe I am the only landowner member (I am a member in my capacity of farmer of my land in hand). I have always been greatly interested in the work it is doing, and I can assure any landowner who looks with disfavour on an agricultural body which does not permit landowner members, that I have seen no sign of incipient hostility or of any feeling other than goodwill and the wish to co-operate in the general movement to benefit agriculture.

Seeing that the attempt to combine landowners and farmers into an effective powerful society has so far proved unsuccessful, it seems to me only natural that there should be a strong demand for a farmers' association, one holding meetings composed entirely of practical men who make their whole living out of the soil—meetings at which there should be complete freedom, a thing not always possible when

landowners attend!

It does not seem possible to devise any single society which is attractive to all agriculturists.

There are still many farmers who hold that the Chambers are working on the right principle in including landowner and farmer: well and good—let them join the Chambers. And there is the National Farmers' Union available for those who hold the opposite view. To meet these diverse sentiments it is necessary to have various societies that will appeal to different individuals.

The first essential is, as I have already said, that all farmers should join some society; and, when the combined societies have a membership of 150,000 or 200,000, agriculturists will indeed be a power in the land. At present all the leading societies, Chambers of Agriculture, National Farmers' Union, North Eastern Counties Federation (including the Darlington Farmers' Union), Yorkshire Farmers' Clubs, to mention the most important that occur to me, lumped together have barely a membership of 40,000, and there are over 400,000 tenant farmers in England.

The second essential is that harmony should exist between the various associations, and a perfect co-operation.

The National Farmers' Union, besides being a strongly political body of the non-party order, is also a farmers' defence society and has done

good work in helping its members with legal advice, even taking up the cudgels for them when necessary.

Though I think I have made it clear that I welcome the advent of farmers' associations, there is, I must admit, one point that causes me some apprehension.

The farmers sitting on committees of the Farmers' Union, or any similar body, are for the most part men little versed in public affairs; they may know what they want, and it may be a good plan to claim rather more than one is likely to get, but it is not wise to ask for the impossible, to make demands which no Member of Parliament, however loyal to the cause of agriculture, can take up with any hope of success.

I have heard as criticism of the Chambers of Agriculture, that the interest of the large farmer predominates and that the rural labourer is unrepresented. The same holds good, I am sorry to say, in the case of the Farmers' Union and kindred bodies.

Though the qualification for membership of the Farmers' Union is as low as possible, being only two acres for small holders, yet labourers with allotments hardly support it at all. In some districts small farmers have joined, but it is the large farmers who carry weight in the councils.

When the Farmers' Unions of Lincolnshire and other counties united into the National Farmers' Union a new phase of existence was entered upon, the work of organisation and administration was greatly increased, and this must increase still more as the Union grows. I sincerely trust that it will prove itself equal to the occasion; any society which can get together 15,000 farmers in four years is doing a great work for the cause.

In 1907 a further development in the agricultural movement took place—the Central Land Association was formed. While farmers were cordially welcomed, the main object was to create a society which would appeal to landowners and make them combine. This society, like the Chambers of Agriculture and Farmers' Union, is political and non-party in its character. It is the very antithesis of such a society as the Land and Property Defence Society. Its object is to combine landowners, not for defence *quâ* landowners, but for the advancing in every possible way of the interests of agriculture as an industry. The majority of landowners are not to be found in the Liberal ranks, and the president and chairman of the C.L.A. are prominent Unionists, yet in spite of these circumstances I think that any impartial critic will admit that the society has dealt with Bills affecting agriculture on strictly non-party lines. It grew

slowly, feeling its way and working out its line of action by degrees. In its second year Lord Onslow was fortunate enough to persuade my old friend Mr. Charles Bathurst to become secretary ; he was the right man in the right place at the right moment. He succeeded in prevailing upon every landowner in his own county of Gloucestershire to join the association. Above all, he made the Central Land Association an influence within the House of Commons to a greater degree than had been achieved by any former agricultural body. During the time of Mr. Bathurst's secretaryship he succeeded, I think, in convincing other agricultural bodies that the Central Land Association, far from poaching on the preserves of other societies, exists for the purpose of aiding all other societies in their work as far as possible, and that it is especially anxious to secure unity and concord among them.

The Central Land Association has now about 1,000 members, i.e., about one-fifth of the total number of landowners of over 1,000 acres; but a larger proportion than this ought to be enrolled in the society in order to give it real weight. We want 3,000 or 4,000 members, and though I happen to have mentioned men owning over 1,000 acres there is no qualification required. Agents, farmers and all persons interested in the welfare of agriculture are welcomed; in fact, I

think it is a good thing, for as many men as can afford it, to belong to a Chamber of Agriculture, Farmers' Union and the Central Land Association, as such joint members would work for harmony between the different societies.

I have pointed out that quite a number of agricultural associations already exist. Too many separate societies are an evil, and it is to be hoped that no more are about to be born; but certainly no one type will appeal to all agriculturists, and therefore we must acquiesce in the necessity of having several societies, and must make every endeavour to secure their harmonious working.

I think it is also evident from the study of past attempts that it is difficult to unite landlords, tenants and labourers in one great association; we must therefore accept the other alternative of organising each class into associations of its own, retaining a separate entity, but working in close touch with the other societies.

The outlook is decidedly hopeful for agriculturists, but much remains to be done; the various societies must be ready to co-operate, and a sense of the importance of agriculture must be forced upon politicians in a way never heretofore attempted.

The consolidation of agricultural societies and their development into a real power in the House of Commons, and with the Conservative and

Liberal Associations, is the immediate problem to be solved.

I hope that the Central Land Association will prove a most important means for effecting the necessary co-operation amongst these societies.

But to accomplish the essential in the realms of politics I must still harp upon the string I have touched before—the Chambers of Agriculture, Central Land Association, Farmers' Union must all increase their membership; power lies in numbers, and the simple duty of men living in the country is to join one or other of the leading societies. If each existing member would solemnly undertake to get one new member in the course of the year the numbers would soon be greatly increased.

It is most necessary that a clear understanding should be reached between the different societies, and that the spheres of work and influence should be more or less allocated, so as to prevent not only undue overlapping but even the expression of diverse opinion on subjects concerning which there should be unanimous agreement in the agricultural world.

Before agriculturists can bring to bear upon politicians that influence to which they are morally entitled, they must be united and their interests consolidated. Unfortunately, it is impossible to be blind to the fact that jealousies exist between certain societies, and for myself I

believe there is only one way of overcoming this great hindrance to the full consolidation of the different societies; that is by meeting in conference and discussing common grievances, and then clearly allocating the spheres of work for each society, thus preventing overlapping, while at the same time securing individual freedom to all.

Though I fear the time is in no way ripe for such a scheme I cannot help thinking that the rough plan of organisation which I drew up some time ago would be most useful were it possible to carry it into effect. The provisions would in no way curtail the individual or independent efforts of any one of the societies concerned, and I hold that if the general principles contained in these suggestions were adopted much needless work would be saved to the respective societies.

1. That with a view as far as possible to prevent overlapping in the work of the various agricultural organisations Round Table Conferences should be held in London at least four time a year.

2. That the Committees of the Central Chamber of Agriculture be recognised as the best bodies for examining in detail Parliamentary Bills affecting agricultural interests, and that the findings of these committees be transmitted to the various associations in the country.

3. That delegates from the various societies

shall attend the Round Table Conferences prepared to discuss the reports of the committees of the Central Chamber, and to suggest any alterations or additions which they might consider advisable.

4. That the Central Land Association, through its Parliamentary Committee, shall take such steps as may be necessary to represent the views of the Round Table Conference in Parliament, either by initiating legislation or by proposing the amendments agreed on by the conference.

5. That the present Parliamentary programme of the Farmers' Union be adopted and supported generally, and that further programmes be submitted to the Round Table Conference.

6. That such organisations as the Farmers' Union, Darlington Farmers' Protection Society, etc., be recognised as the special associations for doing local work.

7. That these associations endeavour by every means in their power to induce parliamentary candidates of both parties to join the Central Land Association. (This is a most important point, as some measures must be devised to keep members of Parliament more closely in contact with the expressed opinions of agriculturists.)

8. That the chairman of the Round Table Conference be chosen in rotation from each of

the different United Associations, or that some suitable person, unconnected with any of the societies, be asked to preside.

The consolidation of the agricultural societies being effected in a greater or less degree, the next problem is, how to increase the power of the agricultural industry in Parliament ?

The first requirement—one might almost say the sole requirement—is money. Every farmer who subscribes to an agricultural society should also subscribe to a parliamentary fund, managed by an executive resident in London and chosen from the respective societies.

Secondly, we must have agricultural candidates. I am not advocating the formation of an independent agricultural party, but I insist upon the necessity of the rural constituencies being represented by practical agriculturists, or, at least, by men who have studied land problems, and not, as now, by townsmen unversed in the needs of the country, or by eldest sons who take no interest in land.

But until a parliamentary fund can be created little can be done in this direction ; the party leaders and whips will continue to dismiss agriculturists with goodly words, in their hearts accounting them but men of straw.

With a parliamentary fund of even £15,000 a year and proper local organisation things would be very different ; the attitude of political associa-

tions would change, and the agricultural interests in a rural constituency would be strong enough to secure the nomination of a man who would put land before party. It would be desirable to choose candidates in pairs—one Unionist, one Liberal—mild specimens of each, so as to secure a non-party character for the movement. At present the party whips are quite willing for an agricultural candidate to fight an enemy in a rural constituency, but they do not at all recognise the principle that rural constituencies should have members chosen for their agricultural qualifications.

This plan would secure a group of champions of agriculture among the supporters of whichever party happened to be in power; it is the system followed with much success by the National Union of Teachers.

Thirdly, the consolidation of the agricultural societies would do much to strengthen agricultural interests in Parliament; but the parliamentary work of even a society like the Central Land Association would be much more effective if the rural constituencies were represented by men who were indeed agriculturists.

I have written about associations of farmers and landowners and have said no word, so far, about the rural labourer, except that he is practically left out of consideration by all.

I am glad, however, to say that there is one

association for him, Mr. Jesse Collings' Rural Labourers' League. This is not quite in line with the other agricultural societies, in that it is decidedly party in character, for it works hard for Unionist candidates in all rural constituencies. Its chief object is to develop small ownership, and it is most strong in those parts of England where there is a demand for ownership. This league has succeeded in attaining a membership of some 10,000, which is good when one thinks of the great difficulties in the way of persuading country labourers to join any society.

There is one other society, a definite union of labourers this time, still more "party" in spirit, being strongly Radical, if not Socialistic, and its aim is to raise the labourer's wages. I say nothing against that, but it also teaches the labourer to seek his own interests as apart from those of farmer and landowner, and it is to be hoped that the Norfolk Union will not spread.

To consolidate satisfactorily the agricultural interests it is essential to bring the labourer into the movement. It is necessary to organise him into unions—analagous to the Farmers' Union—which must needs be non-party in character.

The agricultural movement requires the labourer's vote—at present, his main object in many districts is, alas! to vote the opposite way

from the farmer. The one thing that can cure this tendency is to make the labourer realise that he plays a most important part in the agricultural industry, and that what benefits the industry benefits every individual connected with it; especially he must see that in this movement of agricultural reform the interests and just aspirations of the labourer are clearly recognised.

The great difficulty lies in the organisation of Labourers' Unions. Personally, I have some hopes that the co-operative societies now being formed for the purpose of acquiring land may develop still further and assume a political character. I do not know at all how the executive of the Agricultural Organisation Society would take such a suggestion,—not well, I fear.

There is no blinking one's eyes to the fact that the other agricultural societies, though they may profess a willingness to see the labourers united, take no practical steps to set a movement on foot to this end. This is regrettable, because if the labourers cannot be united to aid forward the agricultural movement, I fear they will be united by Socialists or Labourites against it. Naturally the rural labourer is the hardest man to induce to combine, but it is only a question of time before the leaders of the labour movement will make an attempt to

enrol the country labourer. Many old-fashioned farmers have said to me that it will be time enough for us to begin to influence him when we see Socialists carrying on an active campaign in the counties; but they are wrong—it will then be too late.

I have now arrived, I think, at the stage when I can outline an ideal scheme for consolidating the agricultural interests, whereby landowner, tenant and labourer might each play his part.

Taking the county as the unit, the majority of landowners would belong to the Central Land Association, whose chief work would be in London, but there should be sufficient local organisation to get together meetings if the need should arise. These landowners would at the same time belong to their local Chamber of Agriculture, provided that it was an active one worthy of support, or that there was room for the existence of an effective Chamber without establishing one in direct opposition to any society already doing good work. The Chambers would go on as at present in districts in which there might be a demand for an association of the kind, and their main endeavour would be to increase their membership.

The Farmers' Unions, etc., would do likewise, so that the majority of farmers would in the end belong to some society.

The labourers would be organised into a society of their own which would naturally differ a good deal in its composition from the preceding societies. In the first place it would have to be more parochial in character, for labourers could not go to the market town to attend meetings, although they could attend parish meetings.

Further, the labourers' society would be obliged to concern itself with the question of wages to this extent, that the society should endeavour to secure a rise in the wages of its members as soon as possible after a boom in agriculture, and delay a decrease, if decrease should ever be necessary, as long as possible; this is recognised as a perfectly legitimate object for an association of labourers.

Each society would meet when it liked, where it liked, as it liked; but harmony and continuity of purpose would be secured by the constant interchange of opinions largely through correspondence, and also by means of regular organisers who would go from meeting to meeting. These men would be instructed to put not only the organising of the industry as a whole before the meeting, but also specific cases as need might arise, and thus would agricultural thought be most speedily methodised as it is methodised in other countries.

Finally, there would be joint conferences—

two, three, or four times a year as occasion might demand.

These combined societies acting in concert would constitute the best way of furthering the interests of agriculture in the country—whether dealing with the County Council or the local political associations.

The final organised expression of agricultural opinion would be given by Round Table Conferences held in London as suggested in my former scheme for consolidating existing societies.

There is nothing in the scheme I have just outlined that would preclude any single society from being national or central, and having its headquarters in London.

I do not put forward the scheme as being the best way of achieving the desired end—the consolidation of the agricultural interests; I am quite content to think of it as a temporary scheme biding the arrival of a better, but I do not hesitate to put it forward—for the one reason that it is comprehensive; it deals with the three agricultural classes and with all existing societies. It may not be workable, on account of lack of money to carry out any large plan of organisation; it may not be practicable, owing to inter-society jealousies; but I am convinced that the complete organising of the agricultural interest will be impossible until

some comprehensive scheme is devised to bring landowner, farmer and labourer into the movement of organisation.

CHAPTER VIII

POLITICS AND THE LAND

"THE English party system is in the melting pot." Such was the summing-up of an intelligent German critic after the last election.

And within our own boundaries one hears on all sides that the Conservative party is no longer conservative in the old sense of the word, and that the Liberal is no longer liberal.

Undoubtedly the state of transition has existed for a long time; when it will end, or what it will end in, time alone can tell. Even during the period of quiet, signs of transition were not wanting; signs which, if the Unionist party had read aright, should have induced them to formulate a comprehensive policy of reform —Reform of Land, of the Upper Chamber, of Education, of the Housing of the Poor, of the Poor Law, of Licensing, etc.—reforms which have been carried out to a greater or less degree by Conservatives in such countries as Germany and Austria to the great good of the people

In those countries statesmen for years past

have seriously studied social problems, with a view to remedying or minimising the evil tendencies of the present phase of civilization—the desertion of the land, and the neglect of children, to mention two fundamental questions.

In England politicians have ever endeavoured to put aside the consideration of social problems, and where they were not to be avoided they have been dealt with in a perfunctory way; a problem as a problem is of little interest to the average Englishman. This feature, to my mind, really amounts to a national characteristic.

Then arose the pernicious Manchester School that burst upon the nation with its pleiads of false doctrines. They came at a moment when England, supreme in the manufacturing world, was increasing her wealth by leaps and bounds. Is it surprising, then, that generation after generation of politicians, fortified by apparent results in their belief in the soundness of the Manchester doctrines, were led to neglect the land and the social welfare of the home population and to think only of factories—of foreign trade and foreign relations—and to leave the people to muddle through somehow?

But our people as a people have not muddled through: all medical authorities are unanimous as to the physical degeneracy that has set in among our town population. All sanitary authorities agree that the housing of the poor

is deplorable—the housing in our towns is far worse than it is in Germany or Austria; and those who study social conditions are appalled at the poverty that exists in England and at the number of children who grow up on insufficient food and without legitimate opportunity to develop into useful citizens.

English people may not like to concern themselves with problems, but a vague sense of dissatisfaction has been spreading throughout the country, a feeling that all is not well, and that something should be done. This feeling, which has been simmering during the long period of quiet transition, found sudden expression in the election of 1906. This election marked a new period in English political history; the country definitely abandoned the Conservative party, Labour for the first time became a power in Parliament, and the Liberal party became socialistic. It is essential to recognise this great change that has swept over the nation, if the whole social and political situation is to be clearly understood. It is futile to repeat the old clap-trap as to the swing of the pendulum—it does not account for the present condition in the political world.

That fewer Labour Members and fewer Liberals were returned at the last election does not to my mind affect the case. The people may be turning from Free Trade to Protection,

they may be pausing before accepting the socialistic diet spread before them by the progressive Radicals, but they are not returning to the support of the Conservative party. There has been a reaction, but it is a reaction of a character entirely different from the normal reactions which took place when Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone were the leaders of their respective parties.

There is only one way in which all moderate politicians can meet this vague feeling of dissatisfaction, and that is by formulating a comprehensive policy of reform.

The necessary premiss is that the Government must directly interfere, to a far greater extent than in the past, to secure the improved condition of the people. The people of themselves have been unable to solve the social problem; therefore as the alternative it rests with the Government to see what wise organisation and scientific guidance can do to improve the social welfare of the nation, to raise the average standard of the home population so that we may in truth attain to that happy condition which George Meredith considered as a first essential to empire.

"Let us have an imperial people at home," he said.

There should, then, be but one objective for Unionist politicians, the creation of a policy

of reform; and unless moderate politicians raise the standard of reform—real and effective reform that will assuage that feeling of unrest—then there can be but one alternative, and that is reform brought in by the Socialists.

Socialist reform involves a greater degree of destruction than most moderate men feel to be compatible with the best interests of the country, but it is fatuous to oppose Socialism by anti-socialist leagues. Many Socialists are pains-taking students of social conditions, and a large number of their suggested remedies contain much that is good and deserving of careful consideration on the part of all conscientious politicians.

Socialism should not be met by a blank negative, but by a counter policy of constructive social reform.

There is just now much clamour against Socialism on the part of people who are ignorant of social problems or who have given them only superficial consideration. Most of these people do not really know what Socialism means. It would be well for them to take to heart the words of a great man and clear thinker.

"Many people think it possible to conduct a victorious campaign with the single watchword, 'Down with Socialism.'

"Well, I am not fond of mere negatives; I do not like fighting an abstract noun. My objec-

tion to anti-Socialism as a platform is that Socialism means so many different things.

"I will wait before I denounce Socialism till I see what form it takes. Socialism is not necessarily synonymous with robbery. Correctly, the word only signifies a particular view of the proper relation of the State to its citizens, a tendency to substitute public for private ownership or to restrict the freedom of individual enterprise in the interests of the public. But there are some forms of property which we all admit should be public and not private, and freedom of individual enterprise is already limited by a hundred laws. Socialism and Individualism—I am not fond of these terms. These are opposing principles which enter in various proportions into the constitution of every civilised society. It is merely a question of degree. One community is more socialistic than another. The same community is more socialistic at one time than at another. This country is more socialistic than it was 50 years ago and for most of the changes in that direction the Unionist or Tory party is responsible."

It is to be hoped that all who read this will give heed to Lord Milner's advice on the subject.

We have had recently an exhibition of socialistic principles as applied to finance, of which Lord Milner, in common with all moderate men,

has expressed the strongest disapproval. I am not referring so much to the specific instance proved by the last Budget, but rather to the general policy of ultimate land nationalisation by means of taxing the rural landowner out of existence.

I am not here concerning myself with the question of the nationalising of the land, but with the financially unsound procedure of over-taxing one class of persons connected with the most important industry in the country. Land reform cannot be achieved by taxing the land-owner out of existence, and such a course would very speedily ruin the industry. It rests with moderate politicians to carry through a policy of land reform which shall be thorough and beneficial, not only to the nation, but from the very outset to the agricultural industry itself.

The bringing of the words "Socialism" and "Socialist" so much to the fore is doing untold harm. Thousands of English voters oppose, and I fear will more and more oppose scientific and constructive reforms, because in their ignorance of social economy they think that the proposed reform smacks of Socialism.

There is also a large class of persons who improperly call themselves Socialist because, being interested in social questions, they deem it necessary to proclaim themselves Socialists.

The Church cannot be socialistic: it is harmful for her to pretend to be so; but she should be deeply interested in social problems, and I am glad to think that a large number of the clergy are concerning themselves with the solution of these problems, though I am sure they would do more effective work and carry greater weight with the bulk of churchmen if they would avoid the appellation of "Socialists."

There is another body that I wish would not proclaim its Socialism so loudly: I refer to the Fabians. Some of their pamphlets are, I admit, written by Socialists of the "jingo" type, but their official pamphlets are often excellent summaries of existing evils and contain most sound suggestions for reform. Their "Facts for Socialists" ought to be called "Facts for Politicians" if not indeed "Facts for the Man in the Street."

As the "laisser faire" principle weakens the principle of State interference must grow stronger, but its growth needs scientific guiding. This will be impossible if a large proportion of people, while allowing State interference in this or that specific case, still refuse to consider the whole question of how the State will be obliged to intervene to secure the remedy of admitted evils. This is eminently a subject upon which the opinion of such experts in the art of administration as Mr. and Mrs. Sidney

Webb ought to carry the greatest weight with politicians.

Mr. and Mrs. Webb have devoted many years to the study of the principles of government and their practical administration; and though they are the founders of what I think may be termed the leading society of scientific Socialists in the world, they are so unsocialistic in the ordinary acceptation of the word that they are fully alive to the danger of creating a class of petty officials—mere Jacks in office—than which nothing could be more harmful to a country. They also strongly advocate the encouragement of voluntary work in every direction, and of private experiment—for in the realm of social reform a private individual can do his most useful work by experiment. If the experiment is really successful the individual must, however, expect the State to step in, take up his work and extend it throughout the country as only the State can do: and he should feel no jealousy of the so-called interference, but rather should rejoice that the highest seal of approval had been placed upon his enterprise.

The greatest danger is undoubtedly that of falling under the sway of officialdom, and great care must be taken to avoid it. But regarded as a whole we have a really splendid type of permanent official—probably the most un-official official in the world; and the high tradition

that now exists will be a safeguard for the future, provided that proper care is taken in the selection of officials for the ever increasing number of posts.

One word more about Socialism: if the form or principles of government advocated by the Fabian society, as expounded by Mr. Wells for instance, could be brought about wisely and scientifically as the Fabians wish it to be accomplished, and if the moderate man anxious to improve the condition of the people could in any way satisfy himself that this mild and intelligent Socialism would be, in fact, the Socialism adopted in the hour of social strife, then I think that Socialism would have fewer bitter opponents. But in the hour of revolution the high intellectual leaders go to the wall and the advocates of violent agitation take the lead; in such an hour the populace will give more heed to the voice of the stump orator than to the subtle arguments of the scientific Socialist; it will, in fact, class him as an aristocrat of intellect, and, as such, a few degrees more odious than the landed aristocrat.

The scientific Socialist may be a great power in times of peace, but when the social war is upon us the violent Socialist will be supreme—the Socialist who has given up all hope of securing reform under existing conditions, and who in consequence demands the destruction of existing

society as preliminary to the creation of a new social era. This new society might in the end—after years of evolution—be better than our present society, but during many years almost certainly it would be far worse, for a long period of chaos would be inevitable. Whether or not the out-and-out Socialist party will ever be in a position to attempt a social revolution may be a moot point, but every one feels that the uncompromising Socialist is becoming more and more a menace to society. A grave responsibility therefore rests with all moderate politicians. Unless they remedy without undue delay those crying evils which do violence to all feelings of justice and humanity they will drive into the Socialist ranks many who at present do not wish to destroy but to reform.

But though I am a strong advocate of social reform within the existing order of society, I feel that it would be deplorable if reforms were introduced only as a means of fighting Socialism; indeed, were this the case they would prove effective neither as reforms nor as the weapons for which they were intended.

Putting aside all consideration of Socialism, and hearkening rather to the demands of humanity and justice, politicians must set themselves the task of remedying the more glaring of the social evils—not only the most obvious, such as unemployment and sweating, but the

more extended evil of the under-payment of a large proportion of unskilled labourers. Even where employment is regular and the family sober, the wage earner is often not paid enough properly to keep his family or efficiently to feed his growing children.

Again, if we are to prevent a ruinous degeneracy of race from setting in, it must be possible for mothers and those about to become mothers to receive a far greater degree of care than is the case at present; it must be made practicable for them to avoid work during the critical time. This is particularly needful in the towns, where the recuperative power of the human being is less than it is in the country.

It should not be difficult to devise public kitchens to supply food at moderate charges to households where the housewife should not be at work, and any such plan might be supplemented by a staff of cook-charwomen who could actually work so many hours a day in the house for a small fee. These are only passing suggestions and space does not permit me to develop them here. But it is a most important question affecting not only the mother, but the death-rate among infants and the standard of health of those who survive.

Then, as affecting the health of millions of our people, there is the housing question, which in turn hangs on the land question; cheap land

must be provided for the housing of the town populations, either by the taxation of land values in some form, or by giving municipal authorities compulsory powers to acquire the needed land at a reasonable cost.

The question of poor law reform is very much to the fore ; further reform is undoubtedly needed in our licensing system.

The whole method of handling milk is most unsatisfactory and the supply altogether inadequate.

I am only mentioning in a cursory way such evils in need of reform as present themselves to my mind; each must be judged on its own merits, and in nearly every case it will be found that the land is connected with any sound scheme of reform. The land should play an important part in the solution of the questions of unemployment and poor law reform. It cannot be divorced from the housing of the poor. One would think that it could scarcely be dissociated from the question of defence, yet so clever a writer as Mr. Blatchford makes no reference to land, or in other words to food supply, in his study of the question of defence against a possible invader.

Land, or rather easy access to land, closely affects the rate of wages throughout the country. The land plays a most important part in the physical well-being of the nation, and yet no body

of politicians has a land policy.

As I have already said, the Unionists have taken up the question of peasant proprietorship, and the Radicals of small holding tenancies, with the nationalisation of land as their final objective; but neither party has put forward a comprehensive policy, such, for instance, as the one formulated by the Central Land Association which I here give in full.

CONSTRUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMME

ADOPTED AT A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE CENTRAL LAND ASSOCIATION HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER, 1909.

Resolved:—That in the belief that the time has now come for a Constructive Agricultural Policy, the Central Land Association suggests that immediate and active steps be taken to secure the co-operation of all agricultural organisations and others interested in agriculture in order to achieve the following programme:—

The provision, in all rural elementary schools, of education having a definite agricultural bias, and the inclusion in the syllabus of such schools of the principles of co-operation; and the maintenance of continuation classes, winter schools, farm schools, etc., forming a continuous system

from the elementary school to the agricultural college.

The assistance of occupiers of agricultural land to attain a higher standard of cultivation by the promotion of scientific research, demonstration holdings, and by instruction and experiments in the science, methods and practice of agriculture; and by the organisation of co-operation, instruction in the marketing of produce, and by the provision and extension of small holdings.

The revision of local taxation with a view to the reasonable relief of land from its present unfair share of the expenses to be borne by the community, especially of those incurred in respect of national services.

The extension of facilities for, and the cheapening of, the transport of agricultural produce; and the removal of any preferential treatment of foreign over British produce.

The development of subsidiary industries affecting agriculture.

The granting of facilities for the purchase of their holdings by the occupiers of land.

The simplification and cheapening of the transfer of land.

The establishment of a complete system of co-operative credit banks.

The increase of the agricultural estimates to a sum adequate to the needs of the premier in-

dustry of the country with a view to securing the above objects.

The amendment of the Small Holdings Act with a view to compensation being paid to dispossessed occupiers out of the Small Holdings Fund."

This scheme embodies all the main principles which have led to the successful development of land in Denmark; it is only to be regretted that it makes no reference to fiscal reform, but the committee were placed in a difficult position, in that many members of the association are still Free Traders. Still, no agricultural programme can be really complete that does not include Tariff Reform, or rather, that is not based upon Tariff Reform, as well as upon education and co-operation. It seems strange that land is not one of the chief concerns of the Unionist party, and I am sure that most agriculturists would gladly see that party adopt a comprehensive policy of land reform.

There is no doubt that the Unionist party could bring in sounder land reform than the Liberal party. Liberal land reform must be tainted with the doctrine of nationalisation; further, all the cranks and doctrinaires of the party would endeavour to have a finger in the land pie.

Had the Unionists been developing an effec-

tive land policy during the past twenty years there would be little fear of the Radicals doing much in the way of nationalising the land. But, as things are now, I think it is possible to picture—to oneself at all events—a group of politicians that could introduce land reforms, and indeed all other reforms, even more effectively than could the Unionist party.

I have referred before to moderate politicians, and in the present condition of politics not only are all Unionists "Moderates," but also without doubt many Liberal Members of Parliament and a still larger number of voters.

One hears on all sides that the party system is moribund, that the average intelligent voter is getting more and more tired of seeing party tactics occupy the minds of politicians to the exclusion of imperial and social problems; and therefore I ask, has not the time come when all moderate men in politics should band themselves together and form a National party—to solve National problems?

Perhaps never before in the history of the country have so many reforms been urgently needed as at the present time. Reform is costly, and under present conditions either party bringing in a much-needed reform will certainly see the financial side of it so bitterly attacked by their opponents that the reform will be made to a great extent abortive. And it must be re-

membered that nothing so much strengthens the extreme Socialist party as reforms which end in failure.

If the moderate men in politics would combine, they could bring in reforms with far greater freedom, for though the extreme Radicals and Socialists might not always approve of the social principles embodied in the reform, they would not willingly block the financial proposals, as they are not averse to State expenditure to secure the improvement of social conditions.

Reform is costly, but the existence and growth of social evils is far more costly. Most reforms can be effected out of income, but the evils of continued neglect of land and of increasing overcrowding in cities, (with consequent degeneracy of the race)—to mention only two—disastrously affect the capital of the nation, for land and the effectiveness of the population are the two greatest national assets.

This is a most important point for those who deprecate State interference to bear in mind.

There are also many people who fear not only that State interference but even the attempt at reform will aggravate rather than remedy many of these social evils; above all, that the reform will be of such a character that all sense of responsibility, of duty and independence will be impaired.

Well, it is wrong to stand in such fear of any

evil as not to attempt its reform. And I am convinced that in most cases it will be possible to devise measures of reform which will not impair the sense of responsibility, duty and independence, but rather even increase these good qualities among those who are now so sadly lacking in them.

Many of the measures of reform most needed in England have been in effective working for some years in various continental countries, and it is possible to study their effects upon those peoples: it is here that foreign example and experiment can be most useful—not to be copied or bodily transplanted, but to be studied as a demonstration of the application of certain principles; and if the results are satisfactory then we must endeavour to achieve similar results in the manner most suited to the condition of this country and the idiosyncrasies of our own people.

The idea of a National party ought to appeal to all those who believe in the dual party system in politics, because to my mind the formation of a National party will prove the only way of securing the continuance of this system. On the one side there would be the National party composed of all sound and moderate men, and opposed to them the party of extreme Radicals and Socialists.

If we do not have a National party the

alternative will be the "group system," with the Socialist group ever increasing in strength.

In a former chapter I have laid stress on the importance of organising the rural labourers and bringing them into the movement of agricultural consolidation. If a National party is ever to be a power in the country it will have to win the support of the workman, both rural and urban, and not only so, but to give him his fair share in the control of the general political organisation and of direct representation in the House of Commons.

There is little doubt that neglect of the working man on the part of the Unionists accounted in a great measure for the débâcle of 1906, and it is a lesson which should be laid to heart.

The present state of politics and of feeling among large numbers of moderate men throughout the country seems to indicate that the time is opportune for the unfurling of the banner of a National party.

It seems to me quite possible that a National party, pledged to needed social reform as well as to fiscal reform, would gain the support of many politicians who would not swallow the Tariff Reform pill unless sugared over with reform in other directions; but the crux of the whole situation is—Who shall unfurl the banner? who can create and lead a National

party? I can only repeat Mr. Blatchford's words, "Wanted, a man."

From the agricultural point of view the most satisfactory solution of the political problem would be the formation of a National party—of a party pledged to reforms and clearly recognising the immediate need of a complete land policy, for the reason that all other reforms could only be made effective and satisfactory by basing them on land reform. The great danger of the moment is that though various sets of politicians are interested in this or that reform, no important group has as yet stated clearly that they recognise the fact that land reform is the basis of all reform, or indeed that they realise how closely land, education, tariff, poor law and housing reforms are inter-related, and that they are fully aware of the impossibility of dealing with one of these without giving the most careful consideration to the whole group.

Even at the risk of an undue digression I must refer to Mr. Balfour's attitude towards land, as it is of such importance to the agriculturist.

Although he has recently written a most excellent preface to Sir Gilbert Parker's pamphlet "The Land and the People," I cannot feel that he has yet made the cause of land his own —that he realises that land is the fundamental problem of all, that a flourishing agriculture is essential for the whole country and also neces-

sary to secure the continued prosperity of all other industries; that the agricultural industry must be organised at all costs, and the rural population doubled if that degeneracy of race, of which there are so many signs, is to be effectively remedied.

I am convinced that in the present crisis we want our leader to hold almost as a religious tenet that the land was made for man and man for the land, and not to listen for a moment to the false suggestion that possibly people are better employed in cities than in the country because in cities there is the opportunity of living more amusing and less monotonous lives. Undoubtedly in cities there may be more excitement—unwholesome excitement mostly, and ruinous to health. Country life must be made more attractive—it can be made more attractive when the rulers of the country give their minds to it. Agriculturists are disorganised, their votes do not count. It is distasteful to me to consider mere tactics for catching votes, when such a great subject is before us; but of this I am full well assured—that the statesman who makes the cause of land his own, and forces a strong constructive policy will play the winning game.

If a National party is not formed, then agriculturists will have to fall back upon the other alternative—that of increasing their power

in Parliament on non-party lines as sketched out in the chapter on Agricultural Organisation.

And if the group system develops—and Mr. Balfour in a recent speech declared that it had come to stay—then agriculturists must see to it that they too have their own strong group fighting for their interests. An independent agricultural party, to my mind, seems hardly to come as yet within the realm of practical politics, but it must be mentioned, because many agriculturists are anxious to see such a party created, and the scheme was definitely introduced into agricultural politics at the meeting of secretaries of Chambers of Agriculture held in Lincoln at the Royal Show of 1907, when the following resolution was passed:

"This meeting of secretaries is strongly of opinion that an independent Agricultural Party is *absolutely necessary and could be formed*, and asks the Central Chamber to devote a day to its discussion, and if advisable appoint a Committee to consider the best mode of creating and maintaining such a party, and to send its suggestions to the local Chambers for consideration. Further, this meeting considers that to get as immediate results as possible much can be done by using the means already existing, by forming a joint committee of Agricultural Members in the House, composed of all political parties, which should be in close touch with the Central

Chamber, its business committee and parliamentary committee."

I am glad that the second clause was embodied in that resolution, as it made it possible to take immediate steps to strengthen the cause of agriculture in the political world. There can be no doubt that the agitation has done much good to the cause, and that the House of Commons is paying more attention to agricuitural affairs than it has done for many years. But even the moderate proposal that all rural constituencies should be represented by agriculturists is not viewed with favour by the professional politician, and when it is a question of a full-fledged agricultural party their hostility knows no limits.

Naturally the sound party man dislikes the formation of groups, but if the dual party system is dying, and groups are forming by degrees, what course is left to the agriculturist save in the end to form a group himself ?

But there can be no immediate question of the formation of an independent party ; it costs money to form a party—more money than agriculturists will at present subscribe. But that, apart from financial considerations, it might be quite possible to form an independent agricultural party, Mr. Matthews, the able secretary of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, shows in his carefully-reasoned

argument in favour of the independent party which I reprint here, with his permission.

THE AGRICULTURAL PARTY

A REPLY TO CRITICISMS, BY A. H. H. MATTHEWS

Those who oppose the formation of an Independent Agricultural Party in the House of Commons ostensibly base their objections on three grounds:—(1) That it is unnecessary; (2) that it is impracticable; and (3) that it is undesirable. One of the most able opponents thinks it is unnecessary because (he says) every possible benefit which could accrue from the formation of a Parliamentary group is obtainable by drafting Bills, and by only returning those candidates to Parliament who definitely pledge themselves to support these Bills. I will answer this point first.

Others say it is unnecessary, because an Agricultural Committee already exists in the House, and that that Committee, and the general desire of members representing agricultural constituencies to look well after that industry, is all that is required. This will be the second point dealt with.

Let us assume that half a dozen Bills are drafted, dealing with as many definite subjects, and that we are on the eve of a general election. These Bills are to be launched at the heads of all candidates, and only those

who will distinctly pledge themselves to "vote for these Bills, the whole Bills, and nothing but the Bills," may expect to obtain the votes of the landlords and tenants. Now, I ask is it possible to find any number of men who will pledge themselves to all the points and details which one single well-considered Bill must contain? And if not to one Bill, how much more impossible to find men who will pledge themselves to more than one. If we are to content ourselves with only one Bill at each general election, we shall be very old men before we get much in the way of reform. But supposing, say, fifty such men were found and returned to Parliament, and by great good luck this Bill obtained a place in the ballot, what happens then? It probably passes its second reading and is referred to a Standing Committee. But however well considered a Bill may be, it is extremely improbable that it will emerge from that Committee as it entered it, and if it does not, what becomes of those members' pledges? as this is no longer the Bill to which they pledged themselves.

But we will assume still more, that the Bill comes from Committee without more amendment than these members can reconcile with their pledges; it then depends upon the entirely irresponsible decision of the Government of the day whether the Bill shall "be given facilities"

to proceed further. These members (under our assumption) are only units of one or other of the existing parties, and cannot, therefore, be expected to take any steps in the direction of "putting pressure" upon their leaders in order to obtain these "facilities." So our hope depends upon a string of chances—first, upon finding a number of candidates ready to pledge themselves to all the details of a Bill; secondly, upon those candidates getting into Parliament; thirdly, upon the luck of the ballot; fourthly, upon the chance of the Bill passing without amendment through Committee; and, fifthly, upon the decision of the Government as to whether it shall live or die. I submit that this is not good enough, and even this is only one Bill in four or five years, as that may be taken as the average life of a Parliament.

But we have not yet referred to what must be considered the greatest assumption of all (one fact which our opponents tell us is against us beyond question), and that is the labourers' vote. If it is true that the labourers will always vote against the farmer and the landlord, then good-bye to any hope of returning those candidates who pledge themselves to one or more agricultural Bills, be they ever so well considered. Luckily it is not true; but this comes more correctly under the head of "Impracticability," and must be deferred until

later. I will only add on this point that I think the drafting of Bills is most necessary if taken in conjunction with other steps ; it is the best way of bringing any question forward in a concrete form, and it is a method that the Central Chamber has not used enough in the past.

I now turn to the second argument. It may be only a matter of opinion, but it is a very general opinion that this desire on the part of so-called agricultural Members is more imaginary than real, and has proved most insufficient in the past; and it must be said that if this burning desire does exist among these members they have very thoroughly concealed it. Had they shown it there would have been no such proposals as are now made. It is said that the reason why members have not been so active in the required direction as they might have been is because agriculturists themselves are not organised in a way to express their opinions. This is true to some extent, but for many years there has been an organisation (in the Chambers of Agriculture) which has been able to voice the needs of that industry. We will examine such facts as are available to discover how this desire to serve agriculture has been exhibited; we shall see at the same time the use that members have made of the organisation that was at their disposal.

In the last Parliament there were about 110 M.P.'s who were members of the Central Chamber; in the present Parliament (1906-1910) there are about eighty. Every year these members have been asked to ballot for private members' Bills at the beginning of each session. On an average barely twenty have replied at all, and of those only three or four have promised their ballot. Quite recently twelve members were asked to put their names on the back of a certain Bill; only one took the trouble to reply. The attendance of members at meetings of the Parliamentary Committee of the Central Chamber is deplorable—usually three or four out of fifteen; yet these meetings are always held in the House of Commons in order to meet the convenience of members. The late Government allowed six hours for the discussion of agricultural questions in five sessions, but the only protest came from *outside* the House of Commons. This (1908) session the Government gave a day to the vote for the Board of Agriculture; only one Agricultural Member had any question to raise, and the day was wasted on matters outside Agriculture, while scarcely a score of members representing agricultural divisions took the trouble to attend. There have been more than 100 Acts passed during the last thirty-eight years which increased the burden of local taxation, but, with the excep-

tion of the action taken by Mr. Chaplin against the Education Bill of 1902, they have passed almost without protest. Nearly one hundred M.P.'s were specifically requested (during the session of 1907) to urge that the cost of administering the Destructive Insects Act should be defrayed by the National Exchequer instead of out of the rates; not one single member raised the matter in the House.

This sort of example can be multiplied indefinitely, but enough has been said on this point, and I turn to the Agricultural Committee already existing in the House. I have every reason to believe that there are two such Committees, at any rate I know there were two, one Liberal and one Conservative. These Committees used to meet, though one never heard of their doing much besides electing chairmen and secretaries. It is possible that they occasionally met and agreed to oppose certain Bills, or clauses in certain Bills, but this was when they were respectively in opposition. Even if it can be shown that these Committees have been useful in the past, their use has entirely vanished now. In the *Southern Daily News* of 21st December, 1907, Lord Edmund Talbot, M.P., is reported as having said :—

" . . there was at this moment in the House an Agricultural Committee to which he had the honour to belong, and which met to consider every agricultural question

which was brought forward in the House, and he believed it would be wisest to leave this question of the Agricultural party in the hands of that Committee."

But in the *Hampshire Chronicle* of 7th December, 1907, and in other local papers of that date, Mr. A. H. Lee, M.P., is reported to have said :—

"He had been a member for several years representing what was largely an agricultural constituency, but he had never been invited to the meeting of any such Committee, and he did not know until he read this report of the Central Chamber that there was supposed to be an Agricultural Committee of members of the House of Commons—it had never been brought to his notice: he had never been invited to it."

Mr. Lee has always shown a sympathetic attitude towards agricultural questions, yet he has been kept in ignorance of the existence of such a Committee.

I claim now to have shown that even if an Independent Party is "unnecessary" the present state of things is insupportable.

IT IS IMPRACTICABLE

This is a bold assertion, but it has yet to be proved correct, and there are so many who believe it to be practicable that it will be put to the test. Even if the Central Chamber of Agriculture finds itself unable to carry the matter further, there are societies and individuals who will take up the gauntlet.

It is said to be impossible:—(1) Because no Member, or group of Members of Parliament would fairly represent the landlord, the tenant, and the labourer. (2) Because the expense incurred would prove a burden too great for Agriculture to bear. (3) Because there is no unanimity between the units of any one of the three classes embraced under the term "Agriculturists." (4) Because the labourers will never vote the same way as their employers. (5) Because Party political feelings are too deeply rooted in the minds of Agriculturists to allow them to transfer their allegiance to an Independent candidate. There are others of less importance, but these will suffice. It will be found on analysis that some of these are mutually destructive of each other.

NO. I.

If it is impossible for a Member fairly to represent the landlord, tenant, and labourer, how is it possible for a Member fairly to represent not only those three sections, but the hundred-and-one other sections and interests he affects to represent under present conditions? No one imagines because an individual tries to directly represent that industry which happens to be the principal one in his division that a perfect method of representation has been found. But (on the theory of the greatest good

to the greatest number) it is held that a man who stands for a division where agriculture is paramount, and stands independent of the Party whips, would be better able to look after his constituents than the carpet-bagger who certainly represents a division but, frequently, by no means represents his constituents. We do not hear it said when a man is sent to Westminster to represent the railway interest, the brewing interest, or the N.U.T., that his division is disfranchised as regards every interest except that on which he depends for the funds to pay his election expenses. Nor does that argument hold good here. Any candidate standing in any capacity whatever will have to give expression to his views upon all general questions of the day, and will be subjected to questions from all the societies of faddists, as present-day candidates are subject to them. Unless he can pass through this ordeal in a way that satisfies a majority of the voters he will not be returned.

It may be true to a strictly limited extent that the interests of the three sections of agriculturists are not identical; thus the landlord wants as much rent as he can get, and the tenant to pay as little as possible; or the labourer as high a wage as he can obtain and the employer to pay no more than he need. But these are incidental domestic matters which fade into insignificance beside the much more important

one of obtaining profits large enough to enable each section to get a share. Why are we so constantly being told "that there is no community of interests between the three sections?" We do not hear the same about other industries. It is an accepted fact that if there is no margin of profit in any business that business goes to the scrap heap, and both employers and employed suffer; the latter feel it first, and, physically, most. However much politicians may endeavour to widen the gulf between these sections, for their own base Party purposes, the great truth must prevail at last, and these three sections will realise that they are all in the same boat. Therefore it is *not* impossible for a member to fairly represent them all.

NO. 2.—THE EXPENSE TOO GREAT

It would be intensely interesting if we could ascertain how much of the funds which now keep together the two of the four chief parties comes out of the pockets of agriculturists. As their accounts are not open to inspection, we can only guess that if all agriculturists' subscriptions were diverted into other channels the two central Associations would find their claws cut rather short. Why should not this diversion be turned into a strictly agricultural channel? Moreover, when the ice was once broken, there are many wealthy men who would

stand as agricultural candidates, and pay all expenses, as they do now under other appellations. It is asserted that the whole cost of registration, as well as other costs, must come out of our pockets. If it does I maintain that it would be the best investment that agriculturists could make. Incidentally it is worth consideration whether a strong body of members might not carry through legislation which would materially reduce these same costs. The fact is that this question of cost is chiefly put forward by those who hope thereby to frighten us from our object. But do not let me be misunderstood. I do not wish to shirk the question; it *will* be a costly matter, and all landlords and farmers must bear their share of it; but I say again that it will be money very well spent.

NO. 3.—NO UNANIMITY BETWEEN MEMBERS OF EITHER CLASS.

There is a greater element of truth in this than in any of the other contentions. On several points a farmer in Cornwall will differ from a farmer in Cumberland, and a farmer in Cambridgeshire will not agree with either of them. But while that is true on certain points it is untrue on others. There are many matters which agriculturists desire to see settled, and upon which practical unanimity exists. Absolute unanimity there may not be, but will our op-

ponents tell me of any single question upon which they can get absolute unanimity from any body of men engaged in any industry? Anyone, having even a slight acquaintance with political life, knows that on every question there is, and must be, more or less compromise, some give and take between those who are asking for legislation. This is another point of which our opponents are making the most. Are the Conservatives absolutely unanimous on any one point? Are the Liberals? Are they even sure they are Liberals or Radicals? Are the Labour Party? Are the Irish Party? Are the Teetotalers? Are the Church Party? There is quite as much accord among agriculturists as there is among any other section of the community; but there is less organisation. This is to be regretted, but it does not weaken our case The part of the industry that is organised must look after the whole of it. If the greater part prefers to remain voiceless, it may do so, but it need not. There is no reason why every individual should not take his part in helping to formulate the desires of his industry; and if it be said that the Chambers do not voice the majority, or that they advocate matters which are injurious to those not belonging to the Chambers, let those outside come in and alter that policy. The local Chambers are not "pocket boroughs," and the Central Chamber is just

what the local Chambers make it. This want of unanimity is only another bogey.

NO. 4—LABOURERS WILL NOT VOTE WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS.

This, on the face of it, would absolutely crush out any vestige of hope that otherwise might have been entertained—if it were true, but it is not. There are hundreds and thousands of labourers that, at the present time, vote the same way as their employers. If this were not so, how is it that Unionist candidates for rural divisions ever succeed in getting into Parliament, since the majority of landowners and farmers *have been* on the Unionist side, but have been vastly outnumbered by the labourers ever since the last Reform Act? If some of these labourers have voted for Unionists in the past, and by so doing have voted with their employers, I fail to see why they should not support an agriculturist. I believe, on the contrary, that very many labourers would support an agricultural candidate who would not vote for a Unionist. That, of course, remains to be proved, but I—unlike our opponents—do not assert it as an incontrovertible fact. It is not unlikely, either, that many labourers have got as tired of the election promises of both Liberal and Conservative candidates as have many

of their employers, and would welcome a change.

It was a labourer who first made it clear to me that the interests of the three sections were so largely identical.

I also base my conclusions upon facts gathered during several years spent in organising work among all classes of agriculturists in nearly every county in England. Judging from that experience I am not surprised at Mr. Rider Haggard holding the opinions he gave expression to in the *Times* last December. But Mr. Haggard judges from his own experience in North Norfolk; and in that particular district I found the feeling of antipathy between the different classes far more pronounced than (with one exception) in any other part of England. Mr. Haggard argues from the particular to the general. This is not fair to the labourers. Their interest in the welfare of agriculture is just as great to them as to the farmer or landowner; it is only a question of degree. They are not the ignorant louts that comic and some other papers pretend to think them, and if treated reasonably will act as reasonably as other people. I admit that this is the most difficult point to argue upon in the whole of this question; no less difficult for our opponents than for us, because their main contention is based on wrong conclusions, or, at best, on a

bald assertion; so for the present this point must lie in the lap of the gods. What we have to do is to discuss all these matters with the labourers; reason them out calmly and dispassionately, not with any idea of "cajoling" them into believing this or that, but accepting the fact that if met properly they are as clear-headed as other folk. But this must be done now, not during the heat and viciousness engendered by elections. It must be, of course, a part of the policy of those who are proposing the formation of an Agricultural Party to advocate measures which will benefit the labourers directly, as well as those which will only indirectly touch them. No question will be more popular than Mr. Jesse Collings' Land Purchase Bill, and this must be one of the main planks of our programme.

NO. 5.—PARTY FEELING TOO DEEPLY ROOTED.

In the last section the expression was used: "Since the majority of farmers and landowners *have been* on the Unionist side." I use the words "have been" advisedly, for there are very many men who all their lives have staunchly supported the Conservative Party in the blind belief that they were really the farmers' party, but who had their faith so rudely shaken by the late Government that their allegiance is no longer certain. Some of these might—under

present conditions—vote for a Liberal candidate, many would not vote at all, but practically every one of them, as well as those who have never been tied to either Party, will give their support to agricultural candidates. Moreover, there will be many opportunities for agricultural votes to be given to candidates who, though standing as agricultural candidates, and free of the Party Whips on agricultural questions, will show a decided bias to either the Liberal or the Unionist side. One proposal is that agriculturists should select their own candidates, but that in a division where the preponderating vote is Liberal a candidate acceptable to the Liberals should be chosen, and conversely in the case of a Conservative constituency.

This is another point upon which it is useless for us or our opponents to dogmatise: it remains to be proved, and until it is proved that we are wrong it is unreasonable to say that it is impossible.

The formation of this Independent Party may be impracticable, but we shall require more conclusive arguments than any yet put forward to convince us that it is so.

IT IS UNDESIRABLE

The force of this opinion depends almost entirely upon the point of view of the person making it. I say "almost" because our oppo-

nents give as the ostensible reason for its undesirability the condition of things in those Parliaments abroad where the group system has become a recognised method of government; and from this point of view the group system can be shown to have many disadvantages. But why should we take any foreign method as the standard for emulation? I have sufficient faith in the good sense and freedom from panic of the average Britisher to believe that under the group system he will act in the way that will be best for the country as a whole.

The *Morning Post*, on 6th January, 1908, referring to the autocratic action of the present Government with regard to the "guillotining" methods of last Session, said:

> "Was ever a House of Commons since Cromwell's day treated so autocratically? Of course, it may be said that the majority of the House is to blame for tolerating such treatment. Obviously it is, but Party loyalty is carried very far in these days."

It is indeed—carried so far that the rights and privileges of private members were practically extinguished by Mr. Balfour, with his followers' consent, during his last administration. The reason why Members of Parliament do not occupy the same position as formerly in the minds of the public is entirely due to this fact. The man in the street recognises that the individual M.P. has become a mere pawn in

the hands of his leader, and values him accordingly. We want those privileges restored.

But the great point in this aspect of the question is that it does not matter in the least whether we think the group system desirable or the reverse. It is already with us. Apart from the four main groups in the present House of Commons, there are numerous sub-divisions (held together with some difficulty by their respective leaders) and still others in embryo; and the whole present tendency is in the direction of more clearly establishing this system. It is no use shutting our eyes to this fact, and the sooner men realise it, and set to work to organise their own industries, both inside and outside the House of Commons, instead of wasting effort in a fruitless attempt to instil life into the dead bones of the old parties, the better it will be for them. The two-Party system is some 250 years old, it has done good work in the past, but it has served its purpose, and outlived its use. Its demise has probably been hastened by over-organisation, by the too accurate numbering of heads, and by its destruction of personal thought and initiative. It prevents personal interest being developed in any question, as it is so much easier merely to do what the Whip commands: the useful knowledge which accrues from personal interest is therefore lost, and the units of a Party become in very many

cases mere automatons, useful to their leaders, but no longer representative of their constituents.

The results are necessarily bad. No measure is taken up until the Party in power either sees a chance to please the mob and so to gain votes, or fears to lose them by refraining from action. Merely useful measures have no chance of becoming law, there is no time to deal with anything that does not help to make "an attractive shop window." Time which should be spent on well-considered legislation is wasted over every conceivable dodge by which one Party attempts to score off the other. Instead of devising a rational system of decentralisation, the legislature is choked with business, and recourse is had to that most barbarous, dangerous and unconstitutional process known as the "guillotine." Well-considered legislation is almost a thing of the past.

It may be *undesirable* to try a new system, but it is difficult to imagine that the group system could be worse than the one we suffer under now.

December, 1908.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAND AND THE EMPIRE

The maintenance and development of our imperial heritage should be the ideal of every Englishman, and this conviction should nerve him to make all due effort to secure the fitness of the home population. Englishmen must be fit if they are to carry on the work of empire. The home population—the heart of the empire—must be sound if the outlying members of the empire are to be sound also.

The Englands beyond the seas are calling aloud for men and women : the mother country must listen to that call, but she must listen as a wise mother and send only those suited to the task that is waiting for them.

England must not allow herself to send out men that she has need of at home, and equally she must not offer the worthless surplus town population which is useless to her.

The various Colonial governments are taking such active steps that for some years back they

have been drawing away numbers of our best men—small farmers and agricultural labourers, just the type of men best suited to people our lands beyond the seas, but the type of men also who are most wanted at home.

The migrations of population must be guided into those districts where they will do most to develop the empire.

For years to come England should be the reservoir of population from which our Colonies must draw. It is therefore essential that the reservoir be kept full. We must first colonise the depopulated or sparsely populated rural districts of England by creating a sturdy race of small farmers and independent labourers connected with the land, and the overflow of such a population can with advantage be drafted to the different colonies.

The Land, the People, and above all the effective condition and standard of the people are our greatest Imperial assets. Tariff Reformers with the true Imperial ideal before them wish to see the bonds of Empire strengthened, not only by a deepening of affection between the Mother Country and every one of her colonies, but, as practical men, they would welcome a great Imperial Zollverein which would bind together the commercial interests of the Empire into one solid whole.

It is no use to shut one's eyes to the fact that

the sentiment which we wish to see strong and flourishing must have a practical basis, for it is the duty of the rulers of every country to ensure that their people shall have the opportunity of the fullest national development. This I am convinced will result if the Tariff Reform proposals are properly carried out, but I could wish that these Imperialists would go even further than they do in their scheme of organisation. I could wish that they would realise that behind the commercial problem is the still greater problem of the Land and the People. If land is one of the greatest National assets, so also is it one of the greatest Imperial assets, and we should clearly recognise that the Anglo-Saxon peoples as a whole, whether in the old or the new countries, have been so criminally negligent of this great and important asset, that in every Anglo-Saxon country there has been a most disastrous waste of Land.

In the United States the squandering of land, of forests, of water power, etc., assumes proportions so gigantic that the Government, full late in the day, have been compelled to form a Conservation Board to protect these great National assets; and now the time is fully ripe, if politicians will but realise it, for us too to have a great Imperial Conservation Board with representatives from all the Colonies—a Board whose functions would be to protect Imperial Natural

Assets and as far as possible to guide the flow of population to those parts of the Empire, where population would do most good, not only to the country in question, but to the whole Empire.

One of the duties of this Board shonld certainly be to check the emigration from England of those men who are wanted to develop the land of the Mother Country; in other words, to see that our own waste areas are first properly colonised, and then from the overflowing of population of the rural districts to send out colonists to our countries beyond the seas.

Sir Horace Plunkett, in his excellent book "The Rural Life Problem of the United States," suggests that a Country Life Institute should be created there to work in connection with the Conservation Board. Such an Institute could with equal profit be connected with our Imperial Conservation Board whenever it is formed.

The duty of this Country Life Institute would, on the one hand, be to furnish the Conservation Board with all necessary data, and, on the other, to create a sound public opinion in regard to Land. As I have said before a very general cause of the neglect of Land throughout Anglo-Saxon countries is that our schools of Political Economy have been unsound, ignoring Land as the basis of all prosperity. So that the Country Life Institute would have to undertake the

great work of counteracting the influence of this false teaching, and of creating—and adapting from foreign schools of Political Economy—a new theory of Political Economy which would be based on Land.

If there is no great central body to control and guide the land development of the Empire, and the flow of population, actual chaos will supervene, or at all events without a shadow of doubt one part may gain unduly at the cost of some other part; or a colony will gain at the cost of the Mother Country, and this will be harmful to the whole Empire. We want a constructive policy for the Empire as well as a constructive policy for the United Kingdom. With such a policy the solidarity of the Empire will be secured, together with the even development of the Empire in all its component parts.

A preferential tariff must needs form an important feature in any constructive imperial policy. Imperial defence is another which I am glad to see is receiving much attention. A third point of vast importance is the inter-relation of the systems of education—this also is beginning to be taken into account.

But the basis of any great policy must be the right dealing with land and the people. Land is of little use without men, and too many people without land are a menace to social

stability, yet these conditions actually exist in our empire to-day.

Leaving India out of consideration—for its peoples (with the exception of a few warlike races) do not count as effective population in that they could do little to defend the Empire—we have an empire twenty times the size of the German empire, peopled by some 56,000,000, or 4,000,000 less than the population of the German empire. Fifty-six millions is not a large enough population for the vast area of our dominions.

From the lack of any authority to guide our population we have lost during the past fifty years millions of our best men who have gone to the United States. Millions of the best citizens who now bring strength and wealth to the United States might easily have been retained within the Empire had due encouragement been given them to emigrate to our colonies instead of to the States.

Every able-bodied citizen is estimated to be worth £300 per annum to the country—think of the millions of money we have thus lost! This national and imperial loss must be laid to the charge of the Manchester School; for decades, owing to its influence, English statesmen let the best of our artisans leave the country, and made no effort to guide these potential units to the younger parts of the Empire. The consequent

loss of population has been put by statisticians at 20,000,000; i.e., if the bulk of emigrants that left the shores of England, Scotland and Wales during the past fifty years had settled in the colonies instead of in other countries, they, together with their progeny, would have increased the population of our Empire by 20,000,000.

I mention this to shew the disastrous loss which the empire has suffered owing to want of forethought and guidance on the part of our politicians at home; and it is also the strongest evidence of the existing need for a great organisation officially recognised which shall concern itself with imperial problems.

I cannot bring this book to an end without a final reference to land and fiscal policy. I have endeavoured to show how much more the land of England could be made to produce than now. A great responsibility will rest with the politicians who bring in a tariff on foodstuffs—the responsibility of seeing that right measures are taken to secure the increased yield of home grown foodstuffs, and to provide a closer and more economic relation between the producer and consumer.

There is a great duty which the universities of England could perform—a duty hitherto unrecognised; for they could do much to make their thousands of graduates think, and think

correctly, on the subject of land.

Again, a few millionaires—one single millionaire—could also do much. Doctor Robertson, Canadian Commissioner of Agriculture, has spent during the past fifteen years or so a sum of £1,000,000 provided by that patriotic Canadian, Sir William Macdonald; every sort of development in rural and agricultural education has been carried out; schools and demonstrations have been started which have been taken over by the authorities when their usefulness was proved. The greatest monument to the work of these two men is the great Agricultural and Normal College at St. Ann's near Montreal, which is one of the most perfect institutions of its kind in existence and which is attracting world-wide attention.

We have ample room for one or two Macdonald colleges in England. We hear of millionaires who do not know how to spend their money: may I recommend this way to their notice? Or, if this be too ambitious a scheme, great good could be done by giving one of our practical agricultural colleges a sufficient income, by means of which to accomplish really effective work; an extra £3,000 a year is relatively not a very large sum, but it would make a vast difference in the effectiveness of an existing institution.

Another lesson from America is the amount

of good work that can be done by a group of people combining to promote a common cause. We do this for many things in England—but not for land. In America there is an ever increasing tendency for individuals to interest themselves in the whole range of rural development, and this in spite of the fact that their Government spends vast sums in promoting the same object. There must be many people who are interested in Land and its development to the fullest national use, and it is time that they should lose sight of minor differences and get together to work for the cause.

It is in the realm of politics that one feels most hopeless; for what can be achieved so long as each party only, or mainly, looks upon the development of Land from the point of view of the party gain which can be derived therefrom?

The conviction, therefore, is forced upon the thoughtful observer that to secure a sound policy in regard to Land, and the rural development of the Empire, a National Party, to include all patriotic and honest politicians, is as greatly needed as it is for the carrying out of social reforms whereby a healthy and Imperial people may be maintained in the Mother Country.

THE END

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